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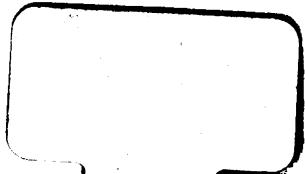
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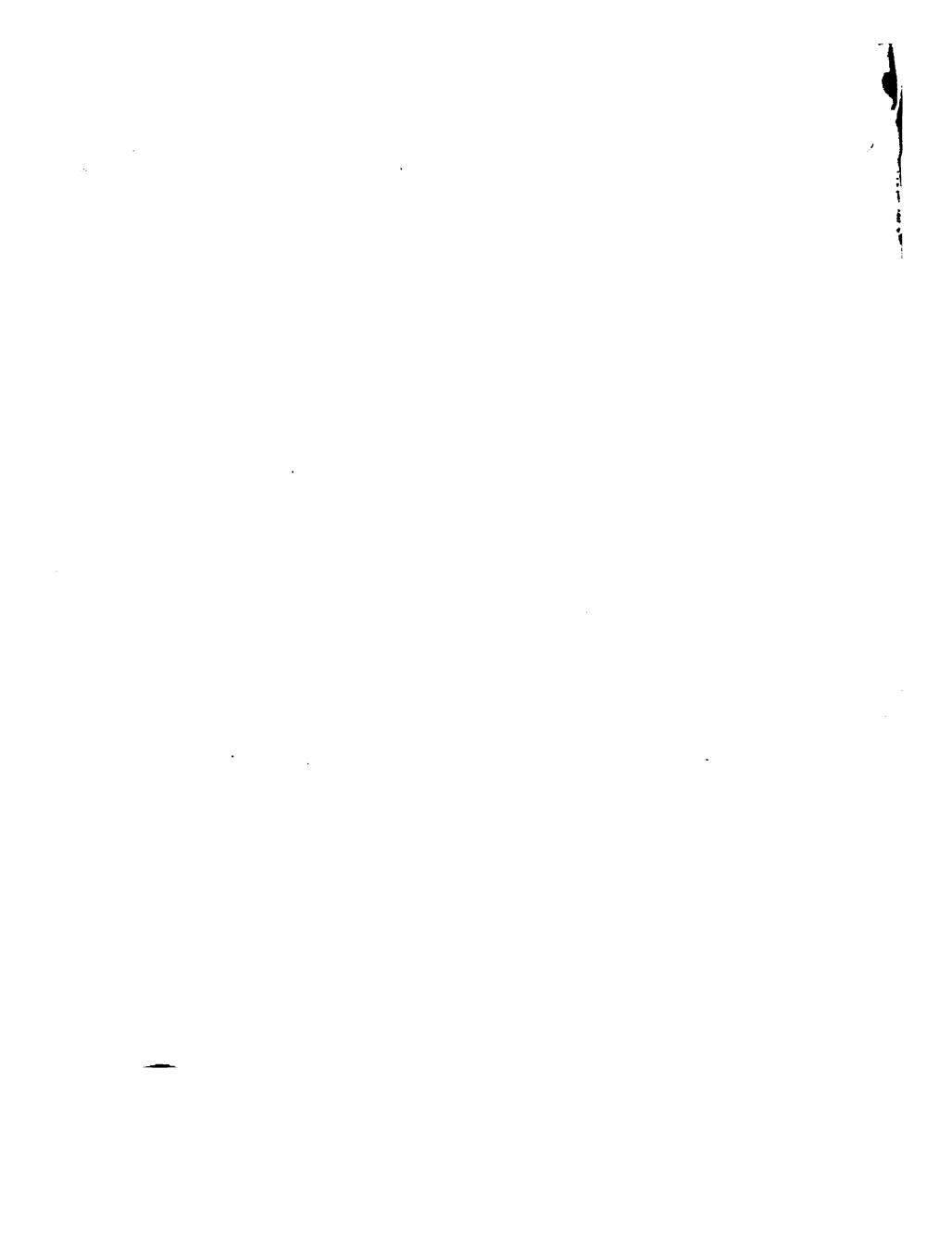


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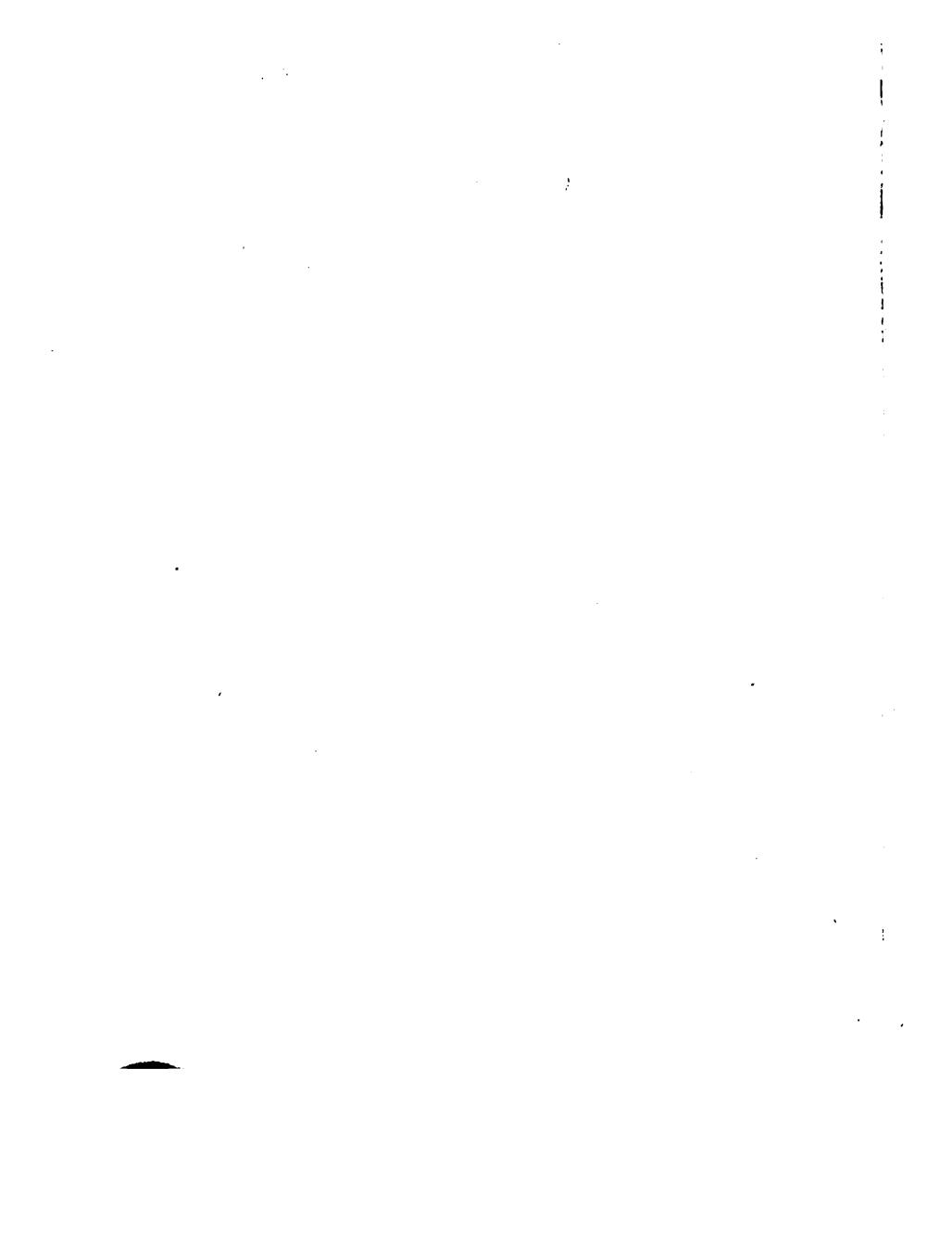
For Hetta,  
from  
Mary H. L.

NBI

Leonard







THE  
STORY OF PORTUS  
AND  
SONGS OF THE SOUTHLAND

✓  
BY  
MARY H. LEONARD



BUFFALO

CHARLES WELLS MOULTON

1894  
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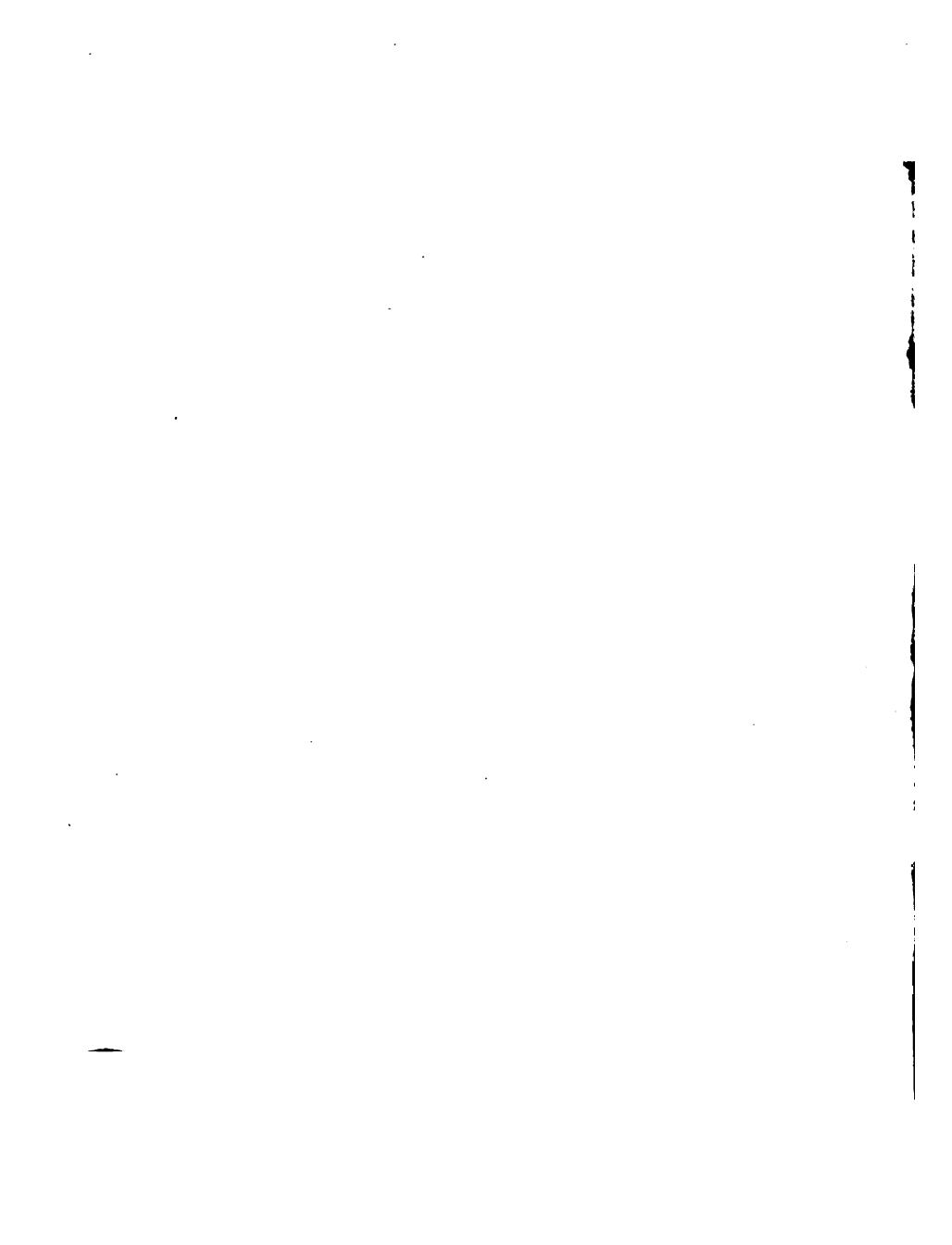
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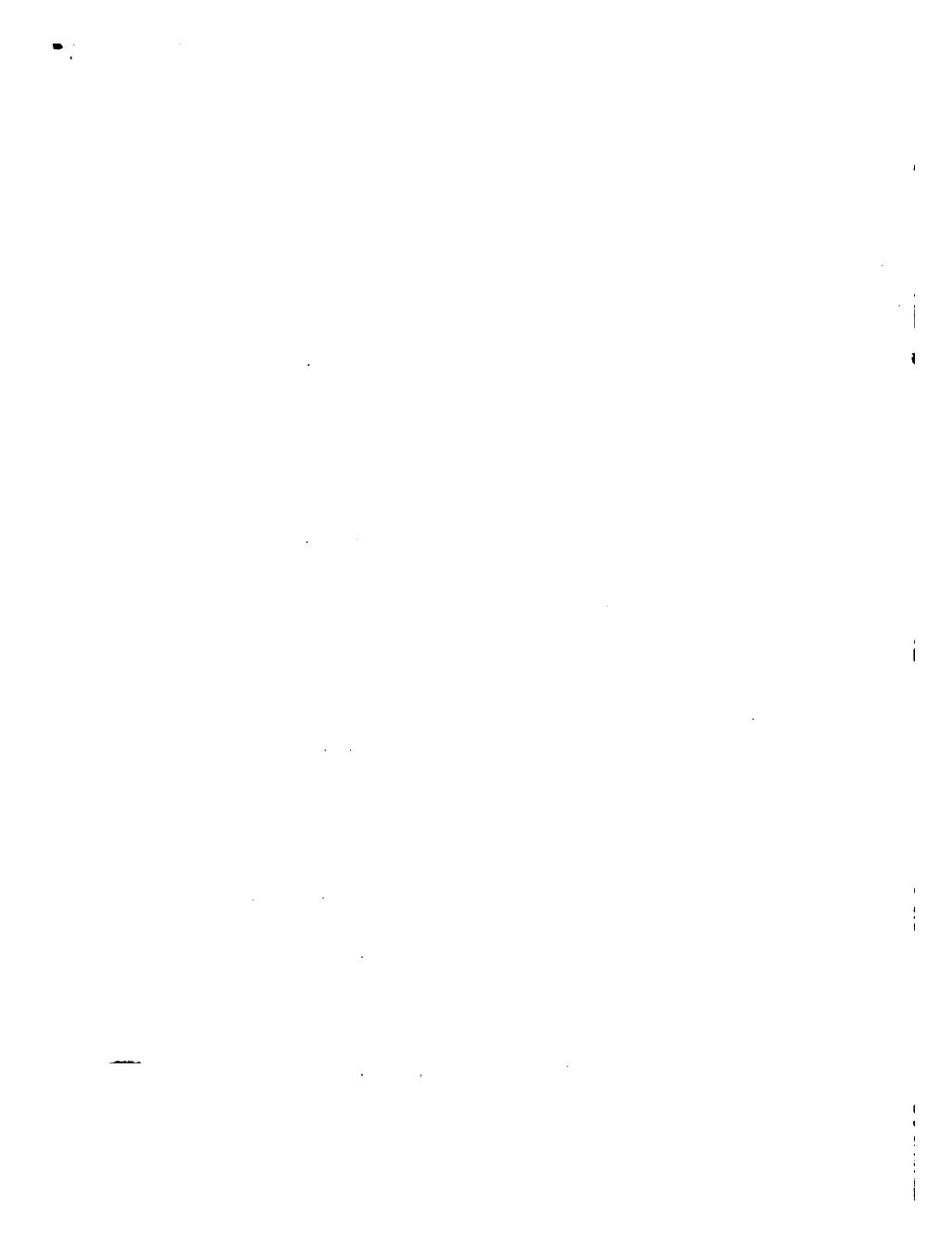
TO  
*MY FELLOW-TEACHERS*  
AND  
*FRIENDS IN SOUTH CAROLINA*  
*THIS BOOK IS*  
*AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED*  
BY  
*THE AUTHOR.*

*Seven Tables - Mar 21, 1867*



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THE STORY OF  
PORTUS



# The Story Of Portus.

## PRELUDE.

THE tale a gracious lady told, whose heart  
    Turns ever toward the haloed days, before  
    War's tempest breath convulsed the Southland  
        air,  
O'er-turned brave hopes and shattered to the roots  
The social system. True, the storm o'er-past,  
The sky was clearer; yet some costly plants  
Were crushed forever.

Many a such doth grieve  
Both for her dead whose fruitless sacrifice  
Stabbed living hearts with an undying pain,  
And wofuller still for the resistless law  
By which To-day effaces Yesterday.  
Sitting among her shadows oft she speaks  
With loving, lingering words of years whose joys  
Loom large in ghostly memory now, whose griefs  
By distance dimmed have lost their outlines keen.  
And though one vaguely ask: "Were the former  
    days  
Indeed so fair? Were never mutterings heard  
Of thunder-clouds that overspread the heaven

And sent their deadly bolts to heart and home?"  
Yet marvel not that this fond gentle soul  
Findeth in ruthless change no kindling glow  
To renew the heart-fire of that earlier time.

Yet once in twilight confidence she sat  
Beside the lightwood blaze whose flickering flame  
Lighted the halls of memory, till she told  
Into a listening ear in accents soft  
This story of her girlhood; and revealed  
That ev'n to eyes of sympathy, perchance,  
The social system held a sombre side.

A simple tale, of stirring incident void;  
Record of lowly lives by lostier swayed,  
Of how the unyielding Way of things doth press  
Too hard on here and there a suffering soul  
Unbent to average lot,—a soul that chafes  
Against the established order, as though born  
For a later era, after tardy time  
Shall bring displacement of the old ideals.

Systems may cruel be, though men are kind,  
And not less cruel to the master power  
Than to the subject. Both in coils are bound  
Till fate shall free them.—Nay, I meant not fate,  
That pagan despot. Our anointed eyes  
Witness the coming of a holier realm  
Before whose scepter systems warped must bow.  
So Earth casts off old fetters: new-born thoughts  
Rule the new world, and over all stands God;



Resistless, hastening not, nor lagging, nay,  
But working in His time His own decree.  
Man doth his little part, yet hath not power  
Greatly to change or quicken. His to keep  
The eye well open to the signal lights,  
The ear attentive to the King's command,  
And so direct his own small orderings,  
That without friction or impeding, they  
May find adjustment in the plan ordained.  
His part so feeble? Then,—'twere trivial fault  
To fail! O coward thought!—Himself  
Unneeded, yet his traitorous life may fall  
O'ertrodden by the triumphal march of truths  
He feared to fight for. Was it Joshua's might  
That levelled Jericho? Yet had he failed  
To blow the trump, then were his memory doomed.  
But till the summons on the appointed day  
No human purpose could avail one whit.

Thus on life's battlefield we wait in faith  
And patience for the fulness of the time.

But pity for the souls too early born  
For life's fulfilments! So I tell this tale.

## THE STORY OF PORTUS.

**O**N a fateful night in the century's earlier half  
A lawless barque with human chattels enladen  
Sought landing with stealthy approach, on the  
desolate coast  
Of the Carolinas. Many a season had fled  
Since the Christian world had vowed that Atlantic  
seas  
No longer should reek with the stain of the traffic  
accurst;  
So eluding the grasp of the law, on a shelterless shore  
With night's black curtain its infamy blacker to  
shield,  
The slaver emptied its wreckage of stolen lives.

Fit scene for the hellish deed was the murky night:  
No sound but the grating keel and monotonous  
plash  
Of the waves, and the plain of the night-bird's  
iterate cry.  
Grim trees en fettered tight by the tangled clutch  
Of insidious vines overshadowed the vaporous marsh  
By the turbid inlet, where sullen and silent the ship  
Its outlaw commission fulfilled and hastened away  
Under cover of darkness to deeds of piracy new.

Among its victims there crouched an emaciate waif  
Of a differing Afric tribe from the Gullah race  
Whose sable descendants enpeople the rice-field  
swamps

Of the tide-water district, his figure lithe, his cheek  
Brown as the hazel whose nuts the Autumn hath  
kissed.

Of royal lineage he. His warrior sire  
Held tyrannous sway o'er a tribal kingdom, enriched  
By savagery's primitive arts, while as yet exempt  
From the white man's curses of rum and the slaver's  
trade.

In the lap of the wilderness cradled, kind nature  
his nurse,

His infant playmates the beasts of the jungle wild,  
To a sturdy stature the child of the forest grew.  
But alas! In an evil moment the boy with the king  
Went forward to battle. His mother within her kraal  
May mourn unceasingly now for her dusky son  
In an enemy's toils a terrified prisoner held.

By leagues of weary marching the captives were led  
Homesick and wretched and worn to the Western  
Sea;

Then to white-faced fiends were sold, whose greed  
for gain  
Made mock at the hellish price. By night they  
rowed

To a waiting vessel whose stifling hold made room  
For the added victims. Becalmed in tropical seas

Through four long weeks, amid starvation and filth  
And the pangs of thirst, the crowded and sickening  
ranks

By the merciful hand of death were speedily  
thinned.

With fever consumed, the life of the slave-boy hung  
On a tenuous thread. But at last a vessel of war  
Gave chase to the lawless ship and a landing forced  
In the hidden inlet. At once as the hold disgorged  
Its sorrowful freight on the bosom of life-giving  
Earth,

Nature recovered her own. In a purer air  
Life's pulses were quickened, and unto the hapless  
child

A kindlier prisonment dawned.

From the auction block  
With its grim allotments of chance, the alien was  
borne

Afar from the mists and the mire of the sea-coast  
belt

To the sand-hill plantations where cotton with  
clinging fleece

Whitens the summer with shearings of Nature's fold;  
Where in shaded covert the mocking-bird warbles  
aloud

Its choicest lays, and from their chalices pure,  
The polished magnolias sweeten the springtime air  
With perfume of incense. Here to a lordly estate  
With sullen demeanor concealing a quivering pain,

By the new-made master the kidnapped negro was  
brought,  
To meet his future mission and destiny fixed.

Strange the reversals of fate; from a savagery free  
To restrictions of civilized life in the chains of a  
slave.

Was it the plot of a demon? Or trace we the plan  
Of a merciful Father who sought to succor a race  
From a heritage pagan? Silent we stand in amaze  
As by light of the future illumined we turn to review  
The pregnant occasions where once humanity stood,  
Deaf to the issues that wait on a moment's decree,  
Blind to the centres where pivot the crises of fate.

Calling from pastime his eldest, cœqual in age  
As in stature, the planter with gesture of kindly  
command  
Led forth the bewildered child, saying: "Rudolph,  
my son,  
This boy is your vassal, your bidding henceforth is  
his law,  
Sole arbiter thou of his duties and discipline meet.  
Yet in word and in action be kind. Let mercy be  
throned  
With justice its twin in thy governance ever. To  
you  
As its guardian this humbler nature in keeping is  
given;

Then care for it well. Nor forget that here dwelleth a soul  
To its Maker subject alone. To its welfare be true  
And unto your servant, provider, protector, and lord."

Around the slave-boy gathered the children at once  
With eager inquiry of parentage, birthplace and name.  
With a faltering tongue the stranger attempted reply,  
But the African word with a barbarous accent fell  
On the ears of the rest; and when to pronounce it they tried  
It sounded like Portus. "Portus, indeed, it shall be,"  
Cried Rudolph. Thus was the name decreed.

These two  
Master and servant, perforce, though children in years  
Entered that day into bonds of relationship fraught  
With issues momentous to both. Unto which was the tie  
The more consequential? Who knoweth? To each henceforth  
Was the other increasingly needful. Where Rudolph was found  
There Portus followed him close; in his childish plays

Sharing with equal delight, or when manlier grown  
Attending his rambles and bearing the gun and  
the game

On obedient shoulder as homeward at evening they  
fared.

His humble pallet at night the servant would lay  
At the foot of his master's bed to be ready at dawn  
For the morning tendance. To Portus the unused  
toy

And the garment half-worn were bequeathed, and  
when gifts and gains

To the master fell, for the favored slave was reserved  
A generous share. 'Twas a strange and anomalous  
lot;

Best friend and most cherished companion, ever  
at hand

At Rudolph's desire, yet still to be signalled aside  
Whensoever it pleased his whim; but with  
impulse reverse

To be promptly summoned again, for no other  
could know

Like Portus, each wavering humor and wanton  
caprice.

If so were his pleasure, the master might conqueror  
be

In every contest. For what hath the menial to do  
With rivalry equal? Yet still it was trifling despite  
To the chivalrous Rudolph not seldom to yield to  
the slave

The fullest meed of the victor. The recognized  
sense

Of responsible lordship, the claims of the weak on  
the strong  
Fired the conscience and heart of the owner with  
purposeful wish  
To render the servitude happy. The word of  
unkindness  
Gave seldom a wound that could rankle, and never  
in truth  
Fell the heartless blow.

But to eyes of Portus the sun  
Found rising and setting in Rudolph. The master's  
frown  
To the servant was dreariest midnight, his favor  
was dawn.

But time made a wider chasm. When the planter's  
son  
Was intrusted to tutors, the negro was steadily set  
To the tasks that befitted his station, and quickly  
became  
In the ways of tillage and many a manual art  
Abundantly versed. No stint of the guidance  
required  
To fit for the useful life that alone could bestow  
True honor and joy in the lot to the slave ordained.  
But still it was Rudolph's indulgence at night to  
repeat  
His lesson again to the eager ear of the servant  
Who listened with grateful attent, in the wish to  
become

As nearly like Rudolph as nature and circumstance  
gave.

Though the vigilant law of the State to the bond-  
man forbade

The dangerous key to the treasury-vaults of truth  
In fear to engender plotting or evil-content,  
Yet a household attendant like Portus might safely  
be taught

By the planter's children to read and to write in the  
firm

Conviction that personal ties gave security's pledge.

Thus Rudolph grew and Portus to manhood's  
estate,

In a mutual affection, enlinked with one binding  
decree

Like the law of the Medes and the Persians, ac-  
knowledged by both

Yet never expressed, the law that the will of the  
slave

Must be merged in that of the master. Had Portus  
resisted

That will but once in defiance, could nothing have  
stayed

The vengeance to follow. Submission at ultimate  
cost

Must be exacted—yea,—unto penance of death.

Now Portus ere long had forgotten his African  
speech

And uttered a curious dialect mingled of those  
In cabin and mansion. With deference humble the  
rest

Regarded his loftier station, which privilege gave  
To the others forbidden, and priceless affection and  
trust

From the gentle folk whose dominion his fealty  
owned.

In the rule of the cabins his mandate authority held  
Overtopped by the master's only, his pattern and  
guide.

In a tottering hovel beyond the plantation's bound  
Black Juniper lived, to whom an old planter at  
death

With philanthropic intent, had credentials be-  
queathed

Of full manumission. Sometimes on a Saturday  
night

Free Juny—for thus was the vagabond called—  
would sneak

To the cabins with crestfallen look and in ragged  
attire,

To witness the weekly carousals, or haply, to meet  
The wench that gossip had titled “Free Juny's  
Jane.”

Owning no master and therefore distrusted alike  
By black man and planter, the waif had been forced  
to elect

A white man as guardian, whose written pass might avail  
For the pledge of protection as aimlessly hither and yon  
He shuffled at random will. No station for such Could society offer, a creature adrift, the best To be hoped was tolerance merely. No portion had he  
In the highborn family pride that exultantly filled The breast of the humblest dependant, never a friend  
Save the low-born white who haply might harbor-age give.

When Portus at evening had glimpse of the cow-ering form  
Stealing with hesitant tread by the sheltering fence, His eye grew alert. Garden and henroost were calling  
For vigilance keenest. An unslaved African held Motive for pillage to feudal dependants unknown. So the trusted and trustworthy servant his master's estate  
Right valiantly guarded, his bosom dilating the while  
With pride in the family prestige, and boundless contempt  
For such offscouring.

His master's interest thus  
Portus, as seasons flew by, increasingly felt

His intrusted commitment, his master's advantage  
the sum  
Of his own ambitions; and knew no existence but  
this,  
And felt no longing for other. Nay, are we sure?  
Sometimes when he wandered apart, an expression  
would steal  
To his ox-like eye, a suggestive and hovering gleam  
Of a differing life condition, the elusive sense  
Of a conscious something, a dream or a memory,  
which?  
Did ever a yearning vague for that earlier home  
Utter faint outcry? Did any bewildering ties  
Remain unbroken that reached to that glimmering  
past?

At last the plantation's head to his fathers' dust  
Was gathered; and then Master Rudolph brought  
to the home  
A maiden the fairest in all that country that dwelt.  
Then Portus opened his heart to a larger love  
And to his young mistress devotion more absolute  
gave  
Than to any beside.

Suggested the planter one day  
"Portus, do likewise. Why not? It would please  
me well  
That from all our plantation you freely select for  
your own

A comely girl and gather some family ties.  
Your mistress's maid, pray, is she not fair as the  
eye  
Could desire?" But drearily fell the refusing  
response.  
Then roused to displeasure, the master endeavored  
to move  
His servant's reluctance: till Portus in deepest  
distress  
Said, "No, Massa Rudolph. I eber has serbed  
yo' true,  
But fo' yore chillun wid better liking I works  
Dan fo' darky chillun. So, massa, don' urge no  
mo',  
I wants no wife. Yore fambly plenty fo' me."  
And the master stifled his anger and turned him  
away  
And let his servant compass his will in this.

Now the olive-branches had budded and clustered  
around  
The household roof-tree, and Portus devoted his  
heart  
And his hands to a larger service. No other than  
he  
Might attend the master as borne by the prancing  
grays  
He traversed the bounds of the spacious ancestral  
estate.

Old mistress too was his care; no arm so steady  
To guide the old lady's uneven and lingering steps  
Down the garden walks and support her tremulous  
frame.

But unto his younger mistress as bravely she took  
The arduous duties that fell to a planter's wife,  
His worth was above all counting; for who could  
advise  
Like him, as in care conscientious she watched o'er  
the weal  
Of the manifold weakling souls to her government  
given?  
All the cares of a kingdom were hers, with Portus  
beside  
As Counsellor trusted and Officer chief of State.

Now as Rudolph's children, one after one, began  
In the garden to toddle and sport 'mong the roses  
and vines,  
It was Portus's dutiful pleasure to guard them from  
harm,  
Obeying their childish commands, and obeyed by  
them  
In turn; and he cherished them all as his own.  
Indeed,  
They were truly his only own. What had he be-  
side?  
One gentle child of the group was the one who with  
tears

Narrated this tale by the flickering firelight's glow  
When the grave had closed o'er the dutiful servant's  
head.

The other children of bondage might easily bear  
A dual life; to their owner's service and weal  
One nature devoted, the other with ardor engrossed  
In cabin pleasures, enrooted in personal ties.  
But Portus,—none had he,—and he wished for none.  
At the quarters on Saturday eve or in Christmas  
week

No hand so skillful to pat the juba, or pick  
The string of the banjo, the black man's jovial lute.  
At times he would lead the dance, or the African  
songs

Would chant in resonant tones that reluctantly died  
In a doleful cadence; but oftener still would refuse,  
In moodiest silence sitting or walking apart.

The negroes believed him peevish and haughty,  
uplifted

By loftier service and home neathe the mansion roof;  
And the white folk pitied, and said, "It is hard, we  
know

For a nigger like Portus, but so is his station or-  
dained."

Sometimes in the Sabbath rest he would linger for  
hours

On the turf by the branch, his face upturned to the  
sky.

What did he think of? Nay, was he thinking at all?  
What engendered these moods? What hideth the innermost heart  
In its solitude deep, no clue unto others revealed?  
What intricate elements enter the current profound  
Of onflowing fancies and longings that ceaselessly glide  
Through a human soul? For the untaught African slave  
What thwarted ambitions, what memories well-nigh effaced  
Might be intermingled? Could aught but monotonous blank  
Fill the musings of him who could hope for no change or advance  
In his life conditions?

One morning the mistress said,  
"What is it, Portus, my boy? Would you fain be free?  
To purchase your ransom then, we might give you the chance;  
Though ill can your labor be spared, we might change it perhaps  
To a service for wage, if liberty be your desire."  
"Naw, missus, naw. De free nigger, wat kin 'e do?  
He hab no place nor 'tachment. Nobody keers

Fur de free nigger, nohow."

" You might, if you chose, go North  
If freedom were given."

" Naw, missus, I wants it not,  
De Norf is a stranger lan', an 'tis col' in heart  
Like 'tis in sunshine. Yo an' de chillun am all  
Dat I hab to lub an to work fo'."

The mistress again,  
" Is it Africa then that you long for? Would you  
return  
To the home of your fathers?"

" Nebber," said Portus, aghast,  
" I'se a Christian man. In de sabage wilderness  
now  
Dey is naught fo' me. Mos' like my fambly dead,  
An Portus would starb an' die. No lan' saving dis  
Hab I now. De Souf is my home, an here mus' I  
stay."

But the mistress still, " There is nothing you think  
of that we  
Can alter? You're sure that freedom you do not  
wish?"

" Naw, missus, I'se thankfuller jus' to b'long to you.  
Now I'b no need to worrit myself wid accounts,

Nor to pester my mind 'bout de time wen de rheumatiz come  
To tie dese ol' shoulders an back wid de misery."

Thus  
The kind and compassionate friends could nothing  
supply  
Save pitying love to the humble soul that perchance  
Was pining for what he knew not.

Often at night  
When armed with his master's pass the servant was  
sent  
As a messenger trusted for many a household need,  
He fancied how strangely good it would seem to go  
forth  
His own director the while. Yet his physical needs  
Were supplied to the full. No lack of raiment and  
food,  
With tenderest nursing for trifling ailments,—yes,  
And staunchest devotion bestowed by the childish  
group  
Of his domineering and faithful followers. So  
In a gilded prison his life went silently on.

Under shadowing oaks the master a chapel had  
built  
For plantation worship. Here weekly, on Sabbath  
morn,  
The mistress came with her gentle presence to teach

These ignorant ones of God and Heaven and Christ.  
Sometimes a traveling preacher pursuing his round  
Of mission endeavor would offer his service to  
preach

To the cabin people, and gladly was ever received.  
But at last one day from Yankee-land there arrived  
One who in priestly guise did scatter the seeds  
Of murmuring and revolt. The planters were roused.  
With threats of his life they drove the invader away  
Who thus could abuse hospitality's sacredest claim.  
But the preacher departing a dangerous volume had  
left

(A tale of slavery's wrongs, that had roused the  
world)

Hid in the chapel; and Portus discovered and read.  
Was this the book he had angrily heard discussed  
By the white folk last autumn? "A dastardly lie,"  
they declared.

And to Portus it seemed most unreal. Could such  
things exist?

And yet what mysterious cord did it vibrate within,  
This story so strange? No cruelty e'er had he felt.  
Yet he knew in his innermost soul that should the  
dim thoughts

By the book suggested be openly told, on his head  
Would punishment fall, severer by far than he ever  
Had suffered or feared. And so he stifled his mu-  
sings

And buried the book, nor revealed at the cabins one  
word

Of its dangerous import.

The planters with spirit declared,  
"If that Yankee traitor be found in these borders  
again,  
There's a limb and a halter ready."

Again they affirmed,  
"Our slaves must be carefully taught to assist them  
to fill  
Their stations with happiness here, and to fit them  
for Heaven.  
To these foreign intruders no more will we harbor-  
age give,  
But Christian preachers among us shall fittingly  
teach  
The slaves in our chapels their duty. So came they  
forthwith  
Bishop and Elder,—many a learned Divine,—  
Making their circuits. Sometimes on the Sabbath  
morn  
And again mid-week, the great bell sounded its peal;  
Then all on the old plantation—white-featured or  
black—  
Laid for the time their labors and pleasures aside,  
While with fervent exhortings the preachers showed  
to the slaves  
How Jesus was lord of their souls, and if they were  
washed  
In the blood of the Lamb and in service were faith-  
ful and true,

That the mansions of Heaven were ready for them  
at the last.  
And the children of servitude gladly the message  
received,  
Committing their souls to Heaven (to escape from  
Hell),  
And finding religious joy.

But doth it surprise  
That when the proclaiming of liberty loosened the  
bond  
That bound them so long to these masters, religion  
was found  
From the moral code in their minds too often  
divorced?  
These who no riches had owned, should they rightly  
discern  
Betwixt mine and thine? The equivocal ties of  
marriage  
That might by the auction mart be dissevered at  
will,  
Can we marvel much that still they should fail to  
bind?  
Nay, it is not strange. Its moral perceptions the  
world  
Hath by ages of tutelage gained, and each ignorant  
soul  
And degraded race through discipline only can rise  
To a moral manhood. Yet faith and devotion were  
born

In these childlike hearts that so readily learned to  
rejoice  
In Jesus and Heaven.

From the preachers Portus had learned  
To exhort with fervor; with marvellous unction  
could sway  
The souls of his hearers. No other so quickly  
could move  
The hearts of women devout unto extacy's thrill,  
Till they swooned in religious trance.

But the mistress had said,  
When the chill of November had ushered the busiest  
month  
Of all the twelve; when the holiday season ahead  
And the smokehouse duties to furnish abundant  
supply  
For the food of the year were engrossing the labors  
of all,  
"You must not, Portus, at present. It renders  
unfit  
For the needful and arduous tasks that the season  
doth bring.  
Its fitting time hath religion. For that you must  
wait."

Sometimes when a wrestling hour had been valiantly  
passed  
The dusky visage would gloomier grow. Not  
then

Could the arts of the children awaken a smile, nor  
cajole  
To the nursery stories of rabbit-foot charms, and  
the tale  
How Jack o' My Lantern had once disclosed to his  
eyes  
Darest events to happen.

But to usual mood  
Returning full soon, he loftily honored his station,  
Chief factor in all the affairs of this feudal realm,  
This monarchy small that was ruled by an absolute  
power.  
But stay,—What said I? Was absolute power  
ever given  
To mortal intrustment? No bond or restriction  
imposed?  
On a neigboring plantation to Rudolph's, the owner  
was known  
Far and near as a merciless master. No stigma  
more foul  
Than that one to whom God had committed the  
fostering care  
Of fellow-creatures less favored, should recreant  
prove  
To the trust divine.

One day it was whispered abroad  
That a dreadful deed, more dire than the sensitive  
tongue

Could frame into words, in that planter's name had  
been done  
By an overseer hired. Like the flash of a turpen-  
tine flame  
Was the feeling enkindled, till retribution severe  
From the outraged community fell on their infamous  
heads.  
Then the planters in fellowship gathered, cemented  
a pledge  
That the soil of their State should be sacred from  
tyranny's stain.  
So willed they, and thus kept oppression and cruelty  
down.

One autumn a visitor honored, a lady of thoughtful  
And dignified mien, from her far away English  
abode  
Came to Rudolph's mansion, whose welcoming  
doors swung wide.  
On the latticed piazza at evening she sat with her  
host  
In converse familiar. His sons so handsome and  
brave  
And his fair-haired girls under blossoming rose-trees  
played.  
"These children are blest with a beautiful home,"  
she said,  
"And happy is their allotment."

—  
"Thinkest thou so?"  
The planter replied, "Not seldom I tremble to think

One thought for the future. The Lord foreseeth,  
not I.

But near a volcano's crater, though dormant as yet,  
Our home hath been built, and mutterings now may  
be heard

Of the fearful explosion that on us may finally burst.  
With gloomy foreboding the lives of my children I  
watch.

What fate will their future know? Will they  
worthily meet

The crisis that surely must come, God knoweth how  
soon?

Perhaps before ever their innocent hearts are inured  
To the desperate conflicts of life. But our hands  
are fettered;

Our duty is clear. At every hazard we must  
The social order preserve and protect our homes.  
Not for a moment's reprieve may our leaders relax  
The vigilant watch which alone is our safety's price,  
Eternal warfare waged, whatever the cost,  
Against alien intrigues that threat to engulf us all.  
But the dangers are thickening about us. Incendi-  
aries try

To arouse to rebellion our servants. A cowardly  
part

Their pretensions are playing, with envy and avarice  
mixed.

Mark the ways of these ignorant servants, this  
childish race,

Yesterday savages wild, but to-day brought close

To Christian truth and the comforts of civilized life.  
How else than through slavery's school had they  
ever been reached

By the white man's uplifting touch and the gospel's  
power?

Surely beneath the sun there hath never been seen  
A happier people, a safer allotment than theirs,  
Shelter and food unsailing, and freedom entire  
From anxious thought for every to-morrow's need;  
And the Lord's best bestowment,—labor adapted so  
well

To their strength and their mental resource, in a  
generous soil,

And a genial climate, Nature's beneficent gifts.  
Visit the quarters at evening when labor is done  
And list to their joyous carousals. They seldom  
are sick

And sorrow and anger are transient. Witness the  
joy

Their religion affordeth. If lost for an instant their  
hope,

Forthwith on the next Lord's Day they regain it  
with ease.

Not a fear for time or eternity vexeth their hearts.  
Yet traitorous men of the North seek entrance  
among us

To make these wretched, by rousing within them  
desires

To be soon disappointed, and forcing us ever to  
make

---

Restrictions more heavy. But truly oppression is rare  
In our borders. Bethink you, indeed, why should any exist?  
Even selfish advantage alone might for motive suffice To lead us to kindness. We cherish the beasts that we own;  
Still more fellow-creatures immortal intrusted by God To our training and government. Unto His Judgeship alone  
Our sole account will we render."

And Portus heard  
And pondered in silence.  
Answered the visitor then,  
"Is it everywhere so in the Southland?"  
"Perhaps not, indeed,"  
The planter replied, "There is cruelty shown, it is said,  
In the lowlying tidewater sections of sugar and rice  
Whose rank miasma the white man scarcely can breathe.  
The salaried overseer truly doth sometimes rule  
With a rigorous hand. For the hireling can never be bound  
By those personal ties the inheriting master doth feel  
For his homeborn dependants. Coarsened natures are[those,

Though of Saxon ancestry born, who would choose  
for hire

A task so debasing. And haply most brutal of all  
Is the negro oppressor, when set by his owner to  
rule

O'er his fellows. Then doth tyranny flourish indeed.  
That the system doth harbor its faults, I acknowl-  
edge with pain.

It giveth a power that the despot will sometimes  
abuse;

Round the necks of the masters it hangeth a bur-  
densome load

Too heavy, well nigh, for humanity's strength to  
endure.

I devoutly wish we were able to rid us at once  
Of this vast, half-imbecile horde that so weightily  
rests

On our hands and our hearts. But human systems  
are ever

Imperfect. For us there remaineth no way of es-  
cape.

Our Maker hath placed them among us. Without  
our choice

In the midst of this social order our lot hath been  
cast;

And so we must struggle to fill our appointed place,  
To rule our servants with wisdom, and save our  
State

From anarchy's threat. But I dare not look to the  
end.

Even now low rumblings prelude the gathering storm.

And if it burst,—ah, well,—*we* can survive  
Perhaps. But what can succor that helpless race? "

Thus many a master reasoned. But who shall contend

Against the decrees ordained? The eternal truth  
That every soul in its Maker's image created  
Holdeth inherent right in its personal life  
Nor can truly be owned by another,—this small stone

Cut without hands from the mountain, was destined to grow

And to fill the earth; till at length the image tall,  
An intricate social system, powerful and proud,  
Should be ground to the dust beneath it.

Louder were heard  
The threatenings of trouble, and in their revengeful wake

Came failure and panic; till Master Rudolph at length

Saw poverty's straits before him. His menials now  
Had grown too many and costly. He scarcely could care

For them all. And creditors pressed. Yet he painfully shrunk

From the household dismembering. In truth, hardly better it seemed

To his sensitive nature than parting with children  
and wife,  
But driven to final distress, he summoned the slaves  
And told to them frankly the trouble his vision fore-  
saw.  
Yet he promised, "I never will part the ones near-  
est of kin,  
Nor needlessly heartbreak give. But those who  
have formed  
Slender personal ties, stern fate may enforce me to  
sell  
For the requisite payment of legal and righteous  
claims."

Then the servants, excited and trembling, pleaded  
with tears,  
"Naw, Massa Rudolph,—sell us not from our  
home.  
We'se work de harder, fur true, an' we'se eat de  
less;  
An' we'se holp you through dis yh' trouble."

And Portus came,  
With affrighted look, and in choking voice he im-  
plored  
"Massa, yo knows dat I hab nary chick nor chile;  
But yours, Mass' Rudolph, are mine, and I mighty-  
hopes  
Dat yo' will not sen' me from dem. I sh'd die."

“No, that I will not, Portus,” the planter replied,  
“And indeed I could not spare you.”

Thus that day  
The master gave to his servants a pledge and  
avowed,  
“Your fate is inwoven with mine.” A few whose  
wives  
Or husbands served upon other plantations, to these  
Were removed, themselves and the owners consent-  
ing; except  
For this, the household remained intact.

At last  
A rumor arose, and increased to a marvelous tale  
That a bold fanatic, called Brown of Kansas, had  
shapen  
A hellish plot to incite the negroes to rise  
And to murder the Ruling Race. It was whispered  
low  
Lest suspicion should reach the cabins. But Portus  
was sent  
That night to the neighboring village, and tidings  
vague  
To his ear were drifted. Returning, no hint nor  
word  
He told at the quarters, but straight to the master  
went.  
Unwonted fire in his eye was kindled; his lip  
And his form were quivering. “Massa,” he cried,  
“Dey say

Dat at las' de Yankees hab foun' out a plan fur to  
mek  
De black man free."

"Indeed, and who told you that?"  
Scornful the master answered, not as his wont  
To reply to Portus. "Pshuh! a tattler's tale,  
A madman's trick! A devilish frenzy hath fouled  
The land. But hark ye! Ye need not think it can  
aught  
Achieve. Such dastard crime 'gainst the laws of  
the States  
Were folly. But hush, you fool, and see to it  
well  
That you blab not a word in the quarters."

Trembling still  
Answered the negro, "Massa, yo' do me wrong.  
I hab not tole, an' I promise dey shall not know."

Then the master, relenting, spoke with a kindlier  
tone,  
"In truth, do you wish it, Portus? Would you be  
free?"

"Naw, Massa, it am not fer me, an' I wants it not.  
Yet still, I tink, if 'twar diffunt, den, perhaps  
I would lub fur awhile to wish an' to choose, an' to  
hab  
De ownership true ob myself. But we all mus' tek  
De place dat de Lord hab giben."

“ But tell me, Portus,  
What is it you want? Am I ever unkind? What  
more  
Could liberty give you?”

“ O massa,” the slave replied,  
“ Yo’ hab allus been kin’ an’ protectin’. But yet I  
keep wishin’  
Dat it all war diffunt somehow.” A shining tear  
Trickled down the dusky cheek as he turned away.

But blacker the war-clouds grew, and the gathering  
storm  
That alone could lighten the firmament thundered  
at last  
In fury terrific to rage till the land had been washed  
From the stain of a national sin. Then mid fast  
falling tears  
The bow of Liberty’s promise illumined the heavens.  
Now the master buckled his sword, and departing  
he said,

“ Portus, my faithful boy, to your hands I commit  
The care of this home and its burden of lives so  
precious.”

And the negro’s manhood at thought of the weighty  
intrustment

Awoke in his bosom. With choking voice he  
replied,

“ Nebber yo’ fear, Mass’ Rudolph, I’se tek good  
keer

Ob Mis’ Lucy an’ all de chillum. Dey’s safe wid  
me.”

History hath written that during those terrible years  
Of hatred and bloodshed with menace of famine before,  
On many a lone plantation, innocent babes  
And tender women to hardship and toil unused,  
Waited and prayed for husband or sire or son,  
Protector and prop, who with grim foreboding had left  
His cherished ones far from the touch of a human hand  
Or other guardian and help than the African slave,  
Whose liberty thus by a nation's blood was bought.  
To the faithful hands of its bondsmen the stricken South  
In its desperate strait did its treasures all commit.  
Their willing labor alone did supply the food  
That fed the armies abroad and sustained the homes.  
Through four long years of privation and painful suspense  
They faltered not nor betrayed the responsible trust.

Now freedom at last was proclaimed by the Nation's Head  
As the law of the land. And though no fruition appeared  
For many a month, yet among the slaves its rumor  
Was vaguely whispered, a legend not well understood,

Or but dimly believed. At night by the fires of the cabin,  
When ghostly visions and ancient mysterious tales  
With hesitant voice were repeated, the fancy would dwell  
On the wonderful theme. Was it something to hope or to fear?  
What was this freedom? A Paradise here on earth,  
Where the darkies would all be rich, and would never again  
Be forced to labor? Or was it as white men declared  
A devilish plotting of Yankees with horns and hoofs,  
A scheme to murder the Masters, to take their lands,  
And enslave the blacks in a bondage crueler far  
Than they ever had felt? It seemed to their fancy akin  
To the Judgment Day with its visions wondrously mixed  
Of heavenly crowns and sulphurous gulfs of fire.

The final winter had come and the boasts of success  
Grew ever more loud as the famished and desperate South  
Strove in vain to recover its failing hope and escape  
The defeat impending. The air with rumor was thick  
Of Sherman advancing, the track of his warlike scythe

A desolate swath through the heart of their beautiful State,  
Filled with smoking cities and homes to pillage given over.

Then the direful news that the capital city, the pride Of all hearts, lay in ruin of ashes; its homeless souls Left starving and helpless; that now the revaging host

Were moving to northward; that in a brief time they would pass

Near Rudolph's plantation, where Portus, the faithful slave

At his mistress's bidding made ready with haste to protect

His master's domain from the ruthless invader's power.

Unrest had corrupted the quarters. This turbulent year

Those who fain would escape from labor had wandered away;

While a few at the claims of war were reluctantly sent

To the auction mart, sowing seeds of fear and distrust

Among those who were left.

Now tumult and tremor beset  
The unhappy plantation, as aged and young, black and white,

For the enemy strove to prepare. To the thickest  
grove  
Of the forest, with provident haste the horses and  
mules  
Were driven. In the garden depths the silver they  
buried,  
And filled with food and with treasure each secretest  
nook.  
So made they ready.

Then bravely the mistress assembled  
The household servants at first, and she said, "To-  
night  
The Northern army comes and will doubtless declare  
That you now are free. No struggle longer I make.  
Choose each for himself. But know that you all are  
dear  
To my heart, and that if you remain I will do the  
best  
That I can for your future."

With instant accord they replied,  
"We'se stay wid you eber, Mis' Lucy. We don'  
wanter go."  
So said they at first; but later did many repent,  
And recklessly wandered at will. But Portus drew  
near  
Saying, "Yo' an' de chillun, Missus, am allus my  
own  
An'my only frens. I eber is yours until death."

"God bless you, Portus," was all that the mistress said.

And now she gave bidding that all the plantation people

Before the piazza should gather; then firmly declared,

"The Yankee army approacheth. You all are free. No service longer I claim." A silence profound As the hush of the grave on the group for a moment fell;

Then some of them laughed and shouted, while others wept,

And all in wonder awaited what next should befall.

Now came the advancing host and a Major tall Rode up to the door of the mansion and making salute

Said, "Madam, be not alarmed. No harm shall arrive

To you or your household; but food for our soldiers and beasts

We are forced to take. I will station a guard to to protect

From all needless pillage."

The lady haughtily bowed.

"We are at your mercy," she said. Then turning she passed

To an upper room where her children were gathered  
in fear,—  
That she might not witness the rifling of her home.

Now Portus kept watch all night at his mistress's  
door.

“Here, you fool nigger, come, will you go with us?”  
A corporal asked, “We'll give you a uniform blue,  
And make you a man, by a better species of work  
Than the service of rebel women.”

The dilated eye  
For an instant flashed: his figure grew more erect.  
Not freedom, but manhood, a moment's temptation  
gave.

Then the passive mien came back. “Naw, boss,”  
he said,  
“I'se promise' to stay by Mis' Lucy an' tek good  
keer  
Ob de house an de chillun.”

Next morning the straggling squads  
Of detested bluecoats had passed. But the wrecks  
remained.

All was dismal and bare. Full half the plantation's  
force  
Eager to taste of the newfound freedom had fol-  
lowed  
The wake of the army. A glittering bauble now  
Did this boon of liberty seem to their curious eyes;

Nor recked they of ills they must suffer before they  
should learn  
To prize it indeed at its worth. For the present it  
seemed  
Like permission for leisure and wandering, treasures  
of gold  
To be had for the asking, license unchecked for  
whatever  
Their baser natures might prompt.

In the mind of the child  
While subject as yet to his tutors we seek to instill  
The rules for self-governing action, and labor to  
make  
The practice a gradual habit, lest fettered too much  
In his tutelege early, at last when arriveth the  
time  
For manlier effort, the unused powers should react  
In a warring chaos. Of millions of slaves in our  
land  
On whom without warning the sunrise of freedom  
arose,  
With resolute stride a few forth-started at once  
On the road to a vigorous manhood. But truly to  
most  
The boastful gift of liberty proved at the first  
A pitfall wherein they stumbled; out of whose  
depths  
Some struggled;—but others alas, were powerless  
to rise.

Then shall we say it were best that it had not been?  
But no,—a thousand noes,—it is only by pangs  
Of human distress that a human soul can begin  
Its earthly career. Nor is ever an epoch born  
But by throes convulsive and laboring pains of  
birth.

And liberty then a stalwart manchild proved  
At whose natal hour was a nation's agony paid  
For its deliverance,—yea, and was added still  
Full many an after-pang before healing came.  
Was the price too costly? Nay, if the Lord be true,  
And if He ruleth the nations, dare not we  
To deny His wisdom and love in the stress and the  
strain  
That shook the civilized world when in fulness of  
time  
Salvation was born upon earth for two races in  
thrall.

Now following on apace came the final crash.  
Richmond had fallen, Lee surrendered. All  
The treasure and heartbreak and blood had been  
given for naught.  
Ere long came the master, wounded and helpless  
home,  
From the sufferings of hospital prison at last re-  
leased;  
With his riches vanished, his vigor of youthful zeal  
Departed forever, his home and plantation a  
wreck.

Nor could former experience shed an illumining light  
On the future forlorn into which so blankly he gazed.  
Stricken and stunned for awhile the household sat;  
Then wearily summoned their strength to attempt to restore  
The semblance at least of a home.

But to Portus withal  
Life gathered new meanings. Labor indeed was no less,  
Nay, heavier now than of old. He accepted no wage,  
And his homely allotment by meanlier comfort was graced.  
Yet he felt that the service was joyfuller. It was free.  
Responsibility now had impressed the seal  
Of manhood upon his soul.

He had wisely been taught  
Those industrial habits and arts of manual skill  
Which provident planters were wont to instill in the minds  
Of their chosen dependants. Each lone plantation supplied  
Of well-trained artisans alway an adequate force  
For the household's inherent demands. When the merciless bolts

Of war had fallen, the favored of fortune were  
these.  
While others both Saxon and African, stood in de-  
spair,  
Such souls held resources within, that naught could  
deprive  
Of their measureless worth. So to Portus the priv-  
ilege blessed  
Was given to succor from want the household he  
loved.  
But shortly the idling bands who at Liberty's birth  
Threw away the hoe, expecting thereafter to lie  
In the lap of luxury—labor forever aside—  
Came back from their wanderings, having discov-  
ered how poor  
Was the gift of freedom they knew not at present  
to use  
To final advantage. Some back to the mansion-  
house came,  
Nigh ready to sue for enslavement again, if but so  
They might sustenance freely receive at another's  
hand.  
And many fell ill and died. And some even blamed  
Old Father Abram himself that he made them free,  
But unto the boon no bequest of wealth had added.  
  
Could other than this have been hoped for? Israel  
of old  
Escaped from Egyptian bondage, yet failing of  
rest

In the land of promise and hope, for the fleshpots  
sighed  
That their servitude nourished. And so these dusky  
sons  
Of a later release ungrateful murmurings mingled  
With true thanksgivings. Yet still unto most such  
thoughts  
Were transient, if tolerant harborage ever they found.  
Few of them all would this dear-bought freedom  
have sold  
For a mess of pottage, though laid at starvation's  
door.  
Millions of ignorant souls, they were suddenly  
launched  
Without rudder or pilot or stores for the journey's  
need  
On an unexplored ocean, endangered with shallows  
and rocks.  
Yet in spite of the wrecks that have perished, and  
breakers before,  
What advancement is theirs! In all its annals the  
world  
Such progress hath never recorded in space so brief.  
  
But those were dispiriting times. When the starv-  
ing deserters  
With disappointment devoured came straggling  
back,  
Seeking food and shelter and aid at the master's  
door,

Then Portus impatient rebuked, " Go long wid yo' all.  
I'se tek keer ob de wite folks. Niggers am triflin' account."

But the master with pity, " The cabin quarters are free  
For your habitation again, and if you should choose  
My crop of cotton to make, I will pay you wage  
As I can afford." So with friction and grumbling perchance,  
To the old plantation did many return and begin  
The life of an epoch new with labor's rewards  
And relations as yet untried.

'Twas a desperate age;  
For ignorant hordes at large made villany rife;  
And Justice with paralyzed arm and averted face  
Had fled the courts, in default of her God-given trust.

White men all drunken grown with the gore of war  
Hated the freedmen and deadliest vengeance vowed  
On the new-time rulers; or, haply, if failing of these  
On the dusky tools that they managed.

Then began  
The reign of the Ku-Klux terrors, the long unchecked  
And terrible friction of turbulent years that make

More deplorable comment upon the vile stains that  
deface  
Humanity's record than crimes of warfare itself.

One dreary midnight to Colonel Rudolph it chanced  
That a sudden sickness befell; for the army life  
His powers had enfeebled. Now Portus his mule  
bestrode

To get him in haste to the town for the doctor's aid.  
But arrived at the edge of the wood he encountered  
a gang

Of black-masked riders made spectral by lanterns  
dark.

'Twas the dismal and sickening tale that hath often  
been told.

Mules had been stolen, gardens and henroosts  
sacked;

Then as final incitement, a white man's body was  
found

Near the head of the creek. Suspicion was cen-  
tered at last

On a worthless negro whose hut in the forest was  
built.

Even if false the surmising, example was due.

When law failed to punish, imperative need had  
arisen

That vigilant citizens rise to protect the State.

So the ruthless band in the name of order and law  
Went forth on a lawless errand, but found them-  
selves balked

Of the victim intended, and now in sullenest mood  
They were riding again to their homes.

At the startling sight  
Of the grim procession Portus was filled with alarm  
And fled in dismay. But a murderous voice cried  
out,  
"Halt with yon stolen mule. A nigger abroad  
At midnight betokens no good. Ef yer aint the one  
Thet's been troublin' these yere parts, ye hev sins  
enough  
Of yer own to account for. We'll string yer up  
with despatch  
To yon walnut tree, an' termorer yer damnèd race  
Shall a needful lesson learn."

Then Portus felt  
A sudden pain in the back, and fainting fell,  
Shot through the lung. The maskers gathered  
around  
With the halter ready to finish their bloody deed  
By a ghastly sight for the morning passers by.  
But just as they tightened the rope, on the pallid face  
A glimmer of moonlight fell. The murderer's  
hand  
Relaxed its hold. An astonished voice exclaimed,  
"I 'clar ter gracious. I'm blowed, ef we aint been  
an' shot  
Col'n Rudolph's Portus. Bless me, but 'tis too  
bad,  
Best nigger that ever lived."

## The senseless form

Not untenderly now they lifted, and laid him down  
At his master's door and silently hurried away.  
There the household found him. What human  
skill could devise

Was done for his cure; but the time decreed had  
come.

Feebly his dying whisper was borne to the ears  
Of the sorrowing group that watched the expiring  
breath.

“God bless yo' Massa an' Missus, chillun all.  
Yo' has eber been kin' an' lovin' an' good ter me.  
I has tried to serb yo' well. Dis body b'longed  
To you. But de soul was allus my own an' God's.  
I has no complent to mek. But I'se glad to go  
For in de mansions above, I is suttin sure  
Dat all will be diffunt somehow.”

## They buried with tears

Their dead in a garden nook that his dusky hand  
Had so carefully tended, and planted a rose-tree near,  
And a simple head-board raised with inscription  
brief,

“Portus,—a servant,—faithful unto death.”  
One mourner constant, she who related this tale,  
Unto womanhood grown, erected a marble stone  
As memento befitting the humble friend whose  
devotion  
Had brightened the gloom of her checkered child-  
hood days.

And now the children of Rudolph's children come  
And heap it with roses every returning spring.

---

A simple tale of one who loved and strove  
To do his duty where his humble lot  
Was cast; a fate indeed not *most* unkind.  
All of its compensations slavery gave  
To Portus freely, yea, and sheltered him  
From many an ill that vexeth anxious hearts.  
Why did he wish it different? Nay, hath God  
Made man to bear his image? Can a soul  
Formed to aspire and grow, its all in all  
Find in another's will? Ye parents kind  
Who strive to shape the pathway of your child  
By cherished plans that your best love hath laid,  
Teachers and priests and princes, will ye dare  
To fetter souls you fain would foster, or  
Usurp the Headship held by God alone?

Tale of a system dead, that while it checked  
The onward march of truth and held the seeds  
Of sure decay and death, had none the less  
Bright phases that the world will ever keep  
In tender memory. A social type  
To Southern soil indigenous hath died,  
Never precisely to be reproduced  
While time shall last. So be it. It is well.  
It fitteth not this age. Yet gently still  
We'll write its epitaph. In God's wise plan

It formed, perchance, a needful stepping stone  
To list from savagery a heathen race.  
Yea, more. Its harvest of results to-day  
Hath brought strange races in relations close  
That so the world may truer understand  
Duties and rights of universal man.  
Yet in the firmament of broadening truth,  
Dark cloud-forms still the gray horizon skirt;  
Hard social questions, new, yet ever old,  
In varied forms seek new adjustment still  
In every land and nation, race and clime,  
Yet fail of perfect answer. Like attempt  
To render motion ceaseless,—efforts made  
To square the circle,—problem nearly solved  
Yet still insoluble—so is the task  
In just relations man with fellow-man  
To place, and all with God in harmony.  
What just precedence each should yield to each;  
How should submission blend with mastery  
That so the social order be preserved  
Yet still each heavenborn soul unfettered stand  
In personal growth? Which hath superior claim,  
Mankind or men? Which is the unit fixed,  
The human race, or each small entity it holds?  
Like wheel within a wheel, the small and great  
Each with its central pivot, move we all  
Within society. If broken cog  
Give clash with tiny fellow-wheel, ensues  
Disaster that perchance may hindrance give  
To largest revolution. True indeed,

Must the adjustment be to bind aright  
The one to many, and the all in one.

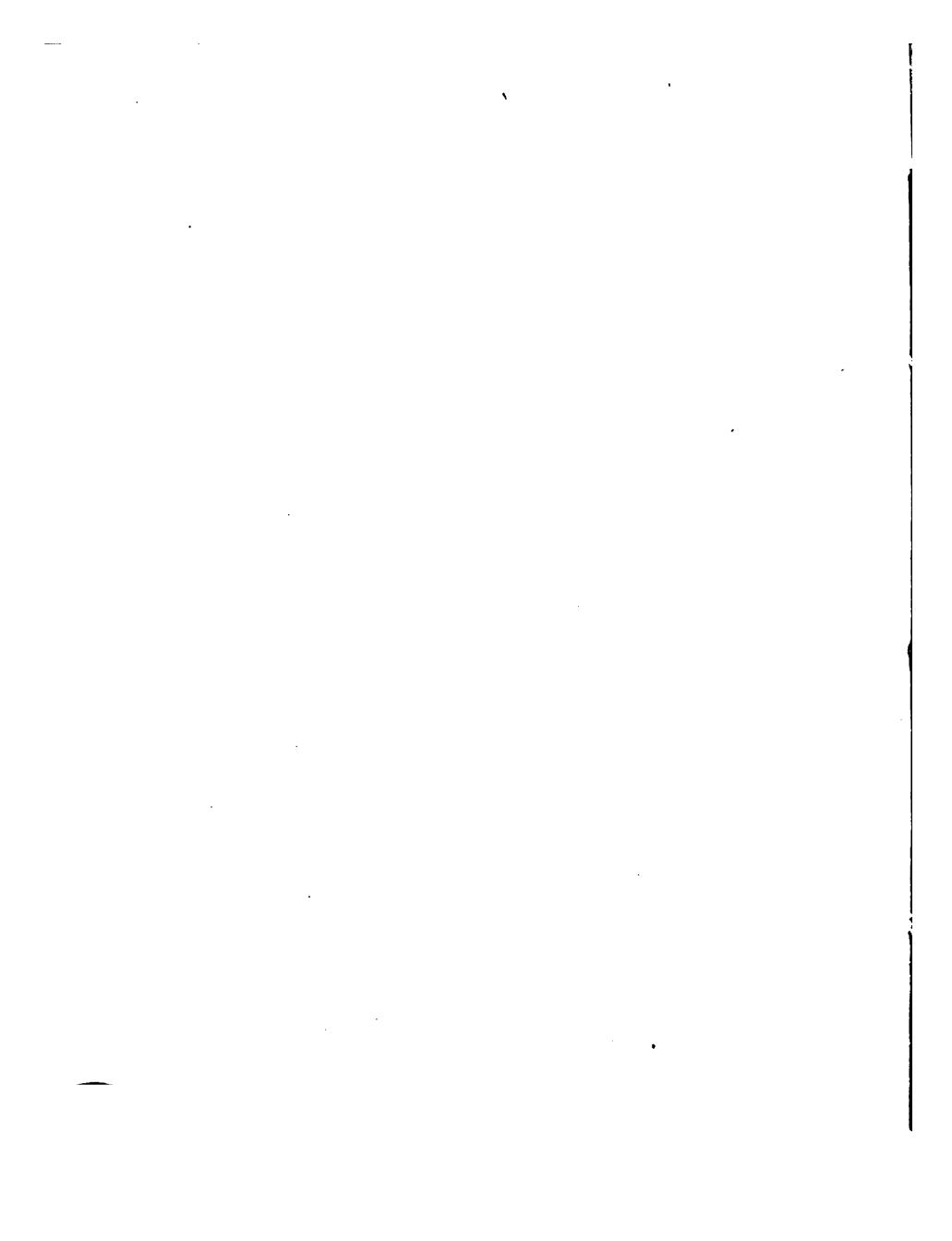
Large conquests hath the conscience of the world  
Through conflict gained and never will restore.  
Thus still shall later truths their triumphs win.  
But oh, the hate, the strife, the jostling jar,—  
The blood of heroes! May we never win  
Reform by peaceful process?

Is the shower  
More potent for the lightnings? Yea, it needs  
Electric flash and shock of thunders rude  
Of perilous vapors foul to cleanse the air.  
This too is Sovereign plan, and in God's way  
Are no mistakes.

As strains of music given  
By players near lend but discordant clash,  
Yet heard afar, blend in proportions sweet;  
So all these discords, if they could be heard  
From Heavenly heights might seem to blend in one  
Triumphant strain of Heavenly harmony.



SONGS OF THE  
SOUTHLAND



## LINES TO A FRIEND.

KIND friend, of mutual faith and kindred taste,  
A thousand cares and joys with thee I've shared,  
And firmest confidence was ne'er misplaced  
However fate hath fared.

Yet in most welcome converse oft hath been,  
Art, science, poesy, whate'er the theme,  
A note of subtle discord entering in  
Like mutterings in a dream.

Is it the fault of climate, or of birth ?  
Of the environment that childhood knew ?  
Because in different latitudes of earth  
Our souls to stature grew ?

Whether because my grandsires gained their bread  
From flinty, frugal soil amid the roar  
Of ocean winds that rocked their cradle bed  
And freedom's message bore;

But thine mid languorous airs of softer clime  
Saw dusky faces at their bidding bend,  
And learned the arts that in a feudal time  
Do feudal graces lend ?

Is it this force of Pilgrim blood in me  
Gives my ideals a differing hue from thine?  
To thee doth glow of age of chivalry  
Make variant virtues shine?

Were't possible all beauties to unite?  
Could thoughts antipodal sweet kinship feel?  
Is not swift impact sure the spark to light  
When flint encounters steel?

A hundred topics fire it. Large or small  
The thought or theme, not one but seems to be  
Close anchored to that central fact in all  
Our nation's history,

The civil strife that gathered as it must  
'Twixt social systems of opposing plan,  
Contentious views of life's relations just  
For man and fellow-man.

They say, "Let be! Bid vain dissensions rest.  
Unearth no more dead issues. We are one."  
What fools they be! The Present is impressed  
With Past, though War be done.

As well forbid that earth's internal fires  
Convulse again its surface, as pretend  
That burning sentiments that roused our sires  
Have met a buried end.

Nor were the fear to speak the honest thought  
A fitting peace for comrades, but for foes,  
Or chance acquaintance, whose communion naught  
Save drear politeness knows.

We read our father's record. At the word  
Yankee am I, Confederate thou again.  
To sudden zeal our sympathies are stirred  
At prick of History's pen.

Yet is the jar all discord? Or at most  
Doth it but serve our angles to abrade,  
And manifest mistakes, a mighty host,  
Our sires in blindness made?

No recreant I to truth because I see  
Some rays that morning mist had erst concealed;  
Base were it if with mounting sun should be  
No clearer light revealed.

I see thy fathers dying without fear,  
For what they deemed the right, resigning all,  
Perplexed in reasons, but with heart sincere  
To follow Duty's call.

I view their courtly mien, the dauntless way  
They slaughtered self a cherished cause to save,  
Nor am I loth my tributes here to lay  
On Lee's and Jackson's grave.

*SONGS OF THE SOUTHLAND.*

But truly thou hast felt more strenuous change,  
So much that seemed at variance with thy past  
With courage hast accepted. Altered range  
Of vistaed life thou hast.

And now, while o'er thy blood-stained soil again  
New hopes, new energies, new joys unfold,  
Thou knowest the fathers did not die in vain,  
Nor would'st recall the old.

Costly the strife in blood and misery  
And countless treasure both to South and North,  
But a united land, fraternal, free,  
Still costlier price were worth.

And loyal souls shall raise thanksgivings still  
In future ages, that through unknown ways  
And human weakness, God did work His will  
And manifest His praise.

So friend, I shun thee not, nor fear to share  
Past memories and hopes of future days,  
Nor dread collision, if we freely dare  
Differing deeds and ways.

No jar, but music, if in steadfast faith  
And generous sympathy we give and take,  
Nor fear that rudest fact that History saith  
Could our leal friendship break.

No need of foreign foe to make us clasp  
Fraternal hands in common cause once more,  
New aims and future issues tempt our grasp,  
To these fling wide the door,

While East and West and South and North unite  
With all their sons, to Freedom's birthright true,  
And build foundations of a future bright  
O'er graves of Gray and Blue.

**SONGS OF THE SOUTH.**

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**CHEVALIER'S SONG.**

**A** LAMENT for the good old days,  
The age of the brave and the fair.  
The times are disjointed, deceivers wax  
strong,  
While argument noisy displaceth the song,  
And sophistries fill the air.

In heartbreak and blood Glory died.  
We spared neither fortune nor life  
In the boldest attempt that was ever begun  
Against hazardous odds. But now it is done:  
Peace reigneth after strife.

---

We buried our hopeless Cause.  
Yet memories sweet fill the mind  
Of the old feudal life, of the sun that has set  
On Chivalry's graces: while deepest regret  
And devotion are left behind.

But the Past in the Future shall live.  
The old order altereth fast;  
Yet from ancestry noble alone can spring  
A noble descent, and till death will we bring  
Tributes meet to our hallowed Past.

#### THE YOUNGER SOUTH.

WITH eyes turned toward the morning  
With garments girt for fray,  
Decrepit issues scorning  
He strideth forth to-day.  
To new resources waking,  
Mighty contingents staking,  
He sees o'er all a coronal  
Of fadeless oak and bay.

What though his wealth be scattered  
And wounds of war still smart?  
Though cherished hopes lie shattered,  
Loud sings his buoyant heart.  
Life hath its resurrections,  
And cheered by Hope's reflections  
He boldly now records the vow  
To act no coward's part.

What if, though passion rages,  
His heart should find this grace  
To solve for all the ages  
Vast problems of the race?  
If here he victory gaineth  
And God's own truth maintaineth,  
With highest claims 'mong conquerors' names  
Shall his deserve a place.

**BLACK MAN'S SONG.**

**F**ROM the land of the sun, sad victims of greed,  
Our fathers were stolen away.  
But the fruit of their grief, by the All-Wise de-  
creed,  
Is our strength and salvation to-day.

In this liberty land are we citizens born,  
Her speech, her religion are ours;  
The touch of the white man, though mingled with  
scorn  
Hath wakened our slumbering powers.

“ The child of the bondwoman may not be heir  
With the child of the free,” they cried;  
But a Christlier gospel pervadeth the air,  
And its truths shall forever abide.

We are coming undaunted, our heirloom to take;  
O brothers more blest, give us time,  
View with patience our faults and assist us to make  
Through struggle a record sublime.

Who knoweth what mission awaiteth us here  
For the land that in common we love?  
Who can say what achievement in us shall appear  
That the world's great adjustments shall move?

“SANDHILLERS.”

**B**ROWN jeans, cotton gown,  
Pipe in mouth, they come to town,  
Dull eye, cheek of tawn,  
Two-wheeled cart by “critter” drawn.

Hawk their wares—(or beg, alas)  
“Berries, ‘lightwood,’ sassafras,”  
Barely live,—no higher aim,—  
Son and grandson still the same.

Do they love? Do they hate?  
Do they choose this dull estate?  
Have they hopes? Have they fears?  
Joys or griefs to mark the years?

Why such lot? In feudal days  
Outcast they from social ways.

Sterile soil—life alone—  
Slave nor master did they own.

What the end? Is for these  
Newborn South of prophecies?  
Or will fate soon or late  
Total type exterminate?

JEFFERSON DAVIS, DECEMBER 11TH, 1889.

THE Southland mourns. With dirge of tolling  
bell  
And bated breath  
Devoted millions to the nations tell  
That war's defeat their homage could not quell  
For chieftain hushed in death.

Not to the stedfast valorous heart alone  
Is tribute brought.  
His name the synonym of glory flown,  
Of fallen Cause which Southerns not disown,  
For which their fathers fought.

In flower-strewn catafalque and thronging host  
We seem to see  
The tenuous wraith of issues that almost  
The nation rent, that dire conclusions cost  
In human destiny.

To sift events of war not this the time,  
Such History's task.

Whether his life-devotion were a crime,  
Or but the frustrate force of soul sublime  
Let future ages ask.

To-day give sepulture to Leader dead,  
To warrior proved,  
And scatter floral requiems o'er his head,  
And deck his gray-robed form with white and red,  
The banner that he loved.

But *not* the nation's ensign! 'Twere unmeet  
Its folds to use  
In hollow half-mast mockery to greet  
Him who till death did clasp his proud defeat  
And loyalty refuse.

Nor would he wish it. Throbs of tenderness  
Beat in his breast  
For Southland only. Then let clamor cease.  
But give him what he loved. And may God's peace  
Upon his ashes rest.

HENRY W. GRADY.

DIED DEC. 23, 1889.

**S**ECSSION'S Chief just gone! And hark!  
Again the knell  
Of death! But on what shining mark  
This missile fell!  
*Then*, strife unhealed gave sorrow scope;  
To-day the new-born South laments a blighted hope.

With words of peace upon his lips  
The soul went forth.  
As bee from bloom the honey sips,  
So South and North  
Drink gentle thoughts this Christmas-tide  
That Grady voiced with moving eloquence,—and  
died.

But what prophetic vision flits?  
The South, long bound  
By dominant ideas, like bits  
Of iron round  
One lodestone point, each separate spar  
By one attraction held, yet bristling wide and far,—

Sudden they fall apart, their pact  
At last o'ercome

By subtle chemic powers that act  
    Resistless from  
New mingling elements, and to our view  
The solid unit falls to fuse in structure new.

Yet nay! Not *chemic* force! Bend low  
    Thy listening ear  
And hear the pulsing life-blood flow;  
    Soon shall appear  
The new organic whole, each vital part  
Feeling with each alike the nation's throbbing heart.

Should Southland faint despairing? No.  
    The Ages cry  
" Movements are more than men," and so  
    Though leader die,  
God hath reserved resources still,  
And through mysterious ways He works His sovereign will.

MAGNOLIA.

THOU Grandiflora, lifting high  
Symmetric branches 'gainst the sky,  
Like a patrician in thy pride,  
My window-pane beside,  
Magnolia!

Thy perfumed snow-white banners fling  
Profuse and free the charms they bring,  
And coral seed-cones scatter round  
Their jewels on the ground,  
Magnolia!

Thy polished leaf-whorls proudly wear  
Each a perennial, courtly air  
As if nor wind nor tempest could  
Debase thy gentry-hood,  
Magnolia!

In gentle clime thou hold'st thy place  
A miracle of stately grace,  
'Mong leafless boughs first envoy seen  
Of tropic evergreen,  
Magnolia!

## A SONG OF COTTON.

SOFT and feathery fibre white  
Pressed in solid bale,  
Substance for my garments light,  
Thou dost tell a tale  
Full of rich association  
With the storied old plantation.

In the ante-bellum days  
Was thy glory felt,  
Ere the rush of modern ways  
Had new rulings dealt.  
Clumsy press and gin-house roomy  
Signify thy history to me.

Chiefest wealth of Southern soil  
Known to planters brave,  
To thy culture given the toil  
Of the humble slave;  
Yet some things they had forgotten  
When they called thee "Old King Cotton."

Watch the glossy plants uprise,  
In their vernal green,  
Row on row before our eyes  
Stretching fair and clean.

Cotton fields in sandy setting  
Charm the eye, bright hopes begetting.

Opening blossoms, white to-day  
Pink to-morrow morn,  
Morrow after, fallen they  
Withered and forlorn.  
But the angled forms appearing  
Prophesy of harvests nearing.

Brown and dry at last the field  
As each bursting boll  
Now begins its wealth to yield.  
Beauty crowns the whole;  
Feathery fleeces soft and clinging  
O'er the earth a mantle flinging.

Sable forms inured to toil  
Soon are gathered here,  
Each plucks out the snowy coil  
Of the fibrous sphere,  
Heaps the lint within his basket;  
Gentler toil, he doth not ask it.

Staple short or staple long,  
Fibre pure and cool,  
Gleaming out in contrast strong  
With his dusky wool,  
Loosened bits around him hovering  
Deck his rags with downy covering.

Now at last the linty seeds  
    Gathered by the gin,  
Go to serve a hundred needs  
    From their wealth within,  
Wealth complete with naught of losing,  
Every grain some worth infusing.

Hath the gathered crop a lien?  
    Ah! if so I fear  
Those rich gains that Hope hath seen,  
    Are doomed to disappear.  
You will rue it, if you put your  
Confidence in a cotton future.

But younger Southrons all around  
    In whose heart of youth  
Is no cotton fibre found  
    Rule the age, in truth.  
Southern factories now are showing  
A new life for cotton growing.

Busy hands to labor lent  
    Here fresh openings find.  
Stalwart hearts with brave intent  
    Leave worn ways behind.  
A regal age shall Faith determine  
Graced by summer's robe of ermine.

## A FATWOOD FIRE.

THE kings of the forest bit by bit  
On my brick-laid hearth into ashes expire,  
While nursing my fancies I dreamily sit  
Feeding my fatwood fire.

Great bunches of "lighters" by country-folk  
brought,  
And sold at the doorway of every buyer,  
Concentrated richness, eagerly sought,  
A cheap and luxurious fire.

These turpentine juices, saved from the still,  
In great tongue-flashes leap higher and higher,  
My room's dusky corners to people and fill  
With ghosts from a lightwood fire;

While healing and fragrance and brightness and  
heat,  
And deep satisfaction for human desire,  
And strength and repose of the spirit do meet  
In the blaze of a fatwood fire.

## MY MOCKING-BIRD.

NO prison cage contains my bird.  
In a leafless water-oak tree  
With mistletoe hung he whistles and sings,  
A hundred quirks has he,  
Trilling, swelling,  
Clear out-welling,  
Loud sings the mocking-bird, loud sings he,  
To a listening world from the old oak tree.

From the selfsame perch each early spring,  
No matter who may hear,  
He pipes his joyous carolling,  
I hearken and draw near,  
Stealthy, spying,  
His form descrying,  
But his modest plumage I scarce can see  
On the topmost bough of the tall oak tree.

What meaning hath this medley strain ?  
Blithe notes of lark and jay,  
Of robin, red-bird, oriole, thrush,  
Mixed in delightful way ?  
In new surprises  
The music rises,  
But what cares the mocking-bird, what cares he  
This reveller gay in the old oak tree ?

Yet changeful songster, tell me true,  
Dost give but mocking sound?  
Surely thine own heart passions seek  
For utterance profound.  
Loving, adoring,  
His soul out-pouring,  
With pathos and merriment still sings he,  
My mocking-bird hid in the old oak tree.

### HERO WORSHIP.

L EAVE us our heroes. Doth stern Truth demand  
The ruthless rasure of each brave ideal?  
May History's page reflect a perfect Real?  
Must not the fragment for completeness stand?

Can we afford to miss the inspiring sight  
Of man's divinest deed in loftiest mood?  
What else doth stimulate to love of good  
Like soaring fellow-soul in highest flight?

Were photograph distinct in noonday glare,  
Each spot by fiercest light more obvious still,  
Truer than artist touch that limns with skill  
The softer outline seen through mellower air?

---

Stay! Though iconoclast in furious mood  
Shatter the shrine of fact with fancy blent,  
Is it so grievous? Man was never meant  
To worship man. The Lord alone is good.

It were not ill that we the lesson learn  
Of human lack and frailty. Truth with Love  
Dwelleth unstained alone in realms above,  
Whereto our humbled souls devoutly turn.

Though earthly gods may fall in fate's reverse,  
E'en while we kneel, behold them close beside,  
Lifting heart homage to the Glorified—  
Heroes no more, but fellow-worshippers.

#### DENIAL.

WITH youth, health, honors, life was crowned,  
While friends and fortune smiled around,  
Yet barrenness of joy he found—

“One boon, one only boon, I crave,  
All else relinquish this to have,  
But wanting, better were the grave.”

In vain his strivings fierce and hot,  
Nor could bestowment bless his lot,  
'Twas *poison*,— And he knew it not.

THE BRIDE.

HE turned away from flower and gift and kiss  
To childhood's nursery;  
And low reclining on her infant bed,  
E'en while her cup o'erflowed with life's best bliss  
A silent tear she shed  
For her lost liberty.

BEAUTY'S SERVICE.

IN the garden of Beauty I wandered with deep'n-ing delight  
Till the pathway divergent revealed to my won-  
dering sight  
Even Beauty herself, in glorious presence advancing,  
And I, into ecstasy thrilled by the vision entrancing,  
Before her in worship fell prone.  
"O goddess," I cried, "I will render thee ever  
My homage devout, and enthrone  
Thy form in my bosom forever."

But with gesture of mild rebuke she put all my  
proffers by.  
"See that thou do it not; for thy fellow servant am  
I."

Amazeful I cried: "Nay, service belongeth to  
commoner creatures.

It would soil thy stainless robe and thy peerless  
perfection flaw.

No touch of grosser use should harden the grace of  
thy features.

Thou rulest a realm far other, thyself thine own end  
and law."

But gently she waved me aside.

"Go question my flowers!" she replied.

So, faring onward, I traversed the garden labyrinth  
over,

While round my steps, up-thronging, pressed  
numberless blooms of clover;

A lawnful of grassy spirelets my hasty footsteps  
were crushing;

Around me showered the petals of apple and peach-  
blows blushing,

And, commingled with theirs, the voice of the  
springing corn

From fields beyond to my ear by the breeze was  
borne.

"O pass us not slightlyng by,"

With eager insistence they said,

"Nor to Beauty our title deny

Because with utility wed."

"Ye are fair," I said coldly, "I grant it; but,  
fairer by far, ye must own,

Are the flowerets that stoop not to use, but bloom  
for delight alone."

Then an odorous whisper breathed o'er me from  
blossoming orange boughs bending,  
"Dost treat our sweet pureness with scorn,  
Or forbid us the bride to adorn,  
Because of the fruitage so luscious toward which all  
our being is tending?"

But I answered: "Each law hath exception.  
And chiefly the fairest flowers  
Know naught save their own perfection  
And the blossoming of the bowers."

Then from heart of the roses faint waftures were  
blown:

"Dost think that the roses no ministry own,  
And in work for the weal of the world have no share  
Because more subtle the missions we bear?  
If our beauty doth satisfy need  
In the nature of man, canst thou know  
How soon it may germinate seed  
Which into high impulse shall grow?"

And the clustering lily-bells rang  
In full chorus of fragrance and sang:  
"Fairest of all the fair charms the fairest among us  
e'er nameth  
Is the precious truth of the Master which ever our  
vesture proclaimeth."

Still I ventured, more humbly: "Once more let me  
ask,  
For buried in forests and hid in the clefts of the  
mountains,  
By desert winds blown and nourished from far-off  
fountains,  
There be myriad flowers that acknowledge nor use  
nor task,  
Apart from arena where right doth battle with  
wrong,  
I pray thee, doth ministry also to these belong?"

Then a mighty murmur arose,  
As though great Nature's repose  
Were aroused to a deep agitation;  
The sand and the stones and all vegetation,  
The insects, the beasts and the birds,  
With one impulse their utterance lent,  
And the winds gave soft modulation,  
While ocean made rhythm, and the stars joined  
with accent harmonious  
The strain that swelled upward in cadence sympho-  
nious,  
Till at last in articulate words  
The myriad voices were blent.

"O Witless One, failest to learn  
Creation's deep law? Dost not see  
How matter inert the floweret doth feed,  
Which yieldeth in turn

Its sweets to the bee?  
The law to all being decreed,  
To satisfy ever the need  
Of some other. Naught liveth alone;  
But in Nature's great Cosmos enlinkèd must be,  
What prat'st thou of kingdom apart? 'Tis  
unknown.

So Beauty true dignity findeth in sweet ministrations,  
And joineth the chorus that yields to the Ruler of  
all adoration."

Then slowly I turned me to where I had seen  
Beauty herself, so majestic in mien.  
And lo! she was fallen a-kneeling, with uplifted  
eyes;  
And with strange surprise  
My heart in silence confess  
That of all her charms the best  
Were not found in her features so faultless, nor yet  
in her figure's grace,  
But were gleams of a Heavenlier glory reflected in  
her face.

#### MISUNDERSTOOD.

**T**WAS not a stranger hand that smote, nor foe;  
'Twas brother gave the blow,  
Nor dealt in wrath, nor meant to wound me so,  
He merely did not know.

## PERPLEXITY.

SPPEAK plainer, voices echoing in my heart,  
Your jargon's import pray reveal to me.  
Swift impulse, duty, judgment, seem to be  
But loud-mouthed wranglers in the busy mart;  
Your differing becks make me to shrink and start.  
Display your ensigns. Show authority  
For what you speak, some grounded certainty  
Of your inherent meanings pray impart.  
I wait o'erwhelmed in all this strife and tangle  
Of sophistry,—this endless clamorous fight.  
O that escape or remedy were found!  
I list, but still the noises jar and jangle.  
When will the potent master-touch unite  
These discords in one harmony of sound?

## APPRECIATION.

NOT praise undue, not censure more than meet,  
Giveth my twin;  
But gentle blame, well earned approval sweet,  
Motive for action, courage in defeat,  
And in my loftiest moods my soul doth greet  
With thoughts akin.

ANSWER.

HUSH, foolish heart, and cease thy bootless strife.  
Thyself hath roused this turbulent anarchy  
Of forces in thy being. 'Tis of thee  
This wrangling jar, with din and clamor rise.  
Like broken string, like shivered lute or fife,  
Like cleaving organ-stop, thy murmurings be  
Discordant minglings in the harmony  
Of the great orchestra thou callest Life.

Still thy wild outcries! Hush thy vain rebelling!  
The heavenly overtones that now are drowned  
In tumult, yield their cadence to the ears  
That hearken rightly to the anthem swelling.  
To souls accordant, no distracting sound  
Marreth the music of the Eternal spheres.

## FULFILLMENT.

**F**INISHED at last, the work whereto I've given  
My best for years, and striven  
Not for self-glory, but because was laid  
On me demand. I made  
The final touch my rainbow quest. At last  
Like a flash fulfillment passed—  
Now weary, empty, purposeless, I ask  
Is it gain or loss to count a finished task?

## THE LEGEND OF NINETY-SIX.

**S**TANGE and inspiring tales come faintly ringing  
From Carolina's old colonial days,  
That storied time its hazy mantle flinging  
O'er white men's struggles and o'er Indian ways.

'Twere well our hearts should keep alive the story  
That kind tradition treasureth from the past;  
We gain new motive from the legends hoary  
That round the tame To-day their halos cast.

Long years ago a band of English rovers  
By the Saluda did their camp-fire fix,  
Where among wooded hills and blossoming clovers  
Lieth to-day the town of Ninety-Six.

But soon on trade intent they left their station  
To seek alliance with the Cherokee,  
And smoked the calumet with that ancient nation,  
Driven westward now by ruthless Destiny.

Thus met the Captain's son, young Allan Francis,  
The dark-browed daughter of the savage King,  
Noble Cateechee,— and mid glowing fancies  
Both hearts were slain by Love's manoeuvering.

Homeward they came. But in the autumn waning  
To slay the white-face planned the treacherous  
Brave.

Cateechee, in her tent, deep slumber feigning,  
Listened and whispered, "I'll my lover save."

Now for the love of Allan see her rushing,  
Through wood and marsh, sun-heat and evening  
damp,

The dewy ground her "silk-grass" mantle brushing,  
To warn the threatened ones within the camp.

The stretching miles her Indian instincts measure.  
Through ninety-six her hasty footsteps fared  
Unresting to the spot that held the treasure  
For whose dear sake such perils she had dared.

Gaining the creek upon the southward lying,  
Prostrate at last in deadly swoon she sank,  
Young Allan saw and with a swift out-crying,  
He threw himself beside her on the bank.

Opened her eyes upon her trembling lover,  
"For you I dared it, and I've come to save  
From death impending." Allan bent above her,  
"My Princess. Love hath proved a conqueror  
brave."

Now by Cateechee warned, with haste the grateful  
And valiant English in the twilight toiled  
For safe resistance, and at midnight fateful,  
The Indian chieftain found his purpose foiled.

Then Allan took the maiden so devoted  
To be his wife, and reared a dusky race,  
And through the region was the story noted,  
And the brave deed gave title to the place.

In later days came modern vandals hoping  
To change by law the ancient honored name.  
But a wise champion, with their purpose coping  
Into the Senate room undaunted came,

Bearing aloft a strange device inwoven  
Of figures "nine" and "six." In deep amaze  
They heard his cry, "Behold my reasoning proven,"  
Inverting then, and turning devious ways,

Upward and downward, left and right, "Now mind  
it!  
North, South, or East or West, on either hand  
Nothing but Ninety-Six can searching find it,  
And for all time this name shall changeless stand."

Quiet the scene to-day, a peaceful village  
Whose modest eye the landscape overlooks,  
Evergreen canes and fruitful fields of tillage  
Enlivened by a hundred sparkling brooks.

And Indian relics strewn the meadows over,  
Old tomahawks and bits of pottery rude  
Tell of the day Cateechee saved her lover  
From dreadful death by loving fortitude.

Here let us pause and these old records ponder,  
And in our minds and hearts their memory fix,  
Around the star-shaped fort that loometh yonder,  
And guards the village of old Ninety-Six.

### CHRISTOPHER GADSDEN.

**I**N the borders of ancient Charles-Town  
Where the Ashley River runs,  
Round Christopher Gadsden gathered  
Brave Carolina's sons,  
And under a massive live-oak shade,  
Gray-bearded patriarch tree,  
They pledged the word and girded the sword  
For the cause of Liberty.

For tyranny's hand was heavy;  
The dullest soul was stirred,  
And the voice of bold resistance  
To foreign rule was heard.  
'Twas Massachusetts gave the call,  
No stronger soul than she  
Unto this day hath shaped the way  
For a people's destiny.

But no second to the summons  
From the faint-hearted came,  
And the smoke of doubt was smothering  
Bright Freedom's flickering flame;  
The blaze that was kindled in Fanueil Hall  
Was swiftly dying out  
For want of a breath to keep it from death  
In all the land about.

In that great crucial moment  
Which tried the souls of men,  
'Twas the voice of Christopher Gadsden  
That pronounced for Union then;  
From the dim Southern distance rang  
His voice in resonant tone,  
"What to one doth befall, belongeth to all,  
We are one people alone."

Then from Hampshire hills to Georgia,  
All the divided land,  
Was moved by a mighty impulse  
In fellowship to stand;

Yea, all the colonies in that day  
With dauntless purpose rose  
And gave their hands in brotherly bands  
Against their country's foes.

First in New England highways  
The blood of the brave was shed,  
But Southern wastes and hillsides  
With the last drops were red.  
For the issues of Concord and Bunker Hill  
The Puritans left their toil,  
But at the last the die was cast  
And won on Southern soil.

Ye have heard how in Carolina  
The Patriot's Cause seemed lost ;  
How ruthless through all her borders  
Ravaged the Conquering host ;  
How with stern restriction and treacherous oath  
The souls that had striven to be free  
In bondage they held, and to earth they felled  
And burned that old Liberty tree.

No tree on History's pages  
Hath better right, I wis,  
No Charter Oak, nor Washington Elm  
For lasting renown, than this ;  
But though its glories all were shorn  
And its site may no man see,  
With reverence here I witness bear  
To the fame of that Old Oak tree.

Long lay the land in darkness,  
    Yet in mountain fastness and swamp,  
Bold Partisans, true to their Country  
    Kept burning Liberty's Lamp.  
In shelterless famine these out-law bands  
    'Mong morasses that skirt the Pedee  
Kept the pledge that they made 'neath the moss-  
    hung shade  
Of Gadsden's Liberty tree.

Let the wrongs of the time be forgotten,  
    The hatred that oft did divide  
As Tory and Whig, close kinsmen  
    Who should have fought side by side ;  
But we'll lift our banners on each July  
    For all the ages to see,  
While oration and bell triumphantly tell  
    Of the conflict that made us free.

And second to none in glory  
    Christopher Gadsden's name  
Upon the patriot roll-call  
    Boasteth enduring fame—  
Large-souled, unwavering, faultless, bold,  
    Lover of Country he,  
Who spied afar the glorious star  
    Of Western liberty.

Still echoing down the ages  
    His voice in accent strong

Reminds us if grown faint-hearted  
To unite against error and wrong,  
To acknowledge now no East and no West,  
No North and no South to see,  
No Dixie—nay—nor New England to-day,  
For Americans all are we.

## SONNETS OF THE SOUTHLAND.

## I.

LAND of the pine and cypress, where the shades  
Of tropic forests that no seasons know  
Are wed to heralds from the realms of snow;  
Where blooms the laurel, while the jessamine braids  
Its golden wreaths, and in dim everglades  
Elegiac banners tremble to and fro;  
Where dark palmettoes wave, and mistletoe  
Gives waxen verdure when the summer fades;  
O land, wherein the mocker builds his nest  
And chants his oracles, and loud adores,  
Where silent marshes clasp the curving shores;  
Thou gracious land, give us the largess blest  
Of chosen souls who lean on Natures' breast  
While in their ear her mysteries she pours.

## II.

In vernal hedgerows blooms the Eglantine,  
And opening fleecy bolls and ripening maize

Give wealthy glories to the summer days.  
O'er wayside bush the fervid passion-vine  
Its regal spray of mystic crowns doth twine.  
Upon a sheltered bank, while fancy strays  
Through purpling distances, we lie and gaze,  
Such rare inheritance, O South, is thine.  
Below, the river to the ocean runs,  
And perfumed air and shimmering splendor lies  
In feeless bounty 'neath benignant skies.  
Thus reverent Nature sings her orisons  
And shows her secrets to the anointed ones  
Who win to read them with anointed eyes.

## III.

A LAND of old renown on History's page,  
Where storied Huguenot and Cavalier  
Their missions blended ; where without a peer  
Gay Chivalry doth boast his golden age :  
Where beauteous women and brave men engage  
Fond Memory's backward look and listening ear,  
Though mingling sorrows start the ruthful tear  
For all that marred the Southland heritage,  
Yet sing its glory now with lute and lyre.  
We bury but the dead. So let it be !  
The Past is safe ! With chastened gladness we  
Will bid its virtues still the heart inspire.  
Only the dross doth yield to furnace fire;  
What ought to live hath immortality.

IV.

A LAND of nameless graves, where heroes sleep  
In blue and gray; the sacred dust of those  
Above whose mouldering bed the rank weed  
grows,  
And never moistened eyes may come to weep.  
The dumb cold earth doth hide their secrets deep;  
Its sealed, unpitying lips will ne'er disclose  
This mortal pathos which no mortal knows.  
Their God doth know, and He their souls will keep.  
The loosened hand-clasp aching hearts still miss,  
And thoughts of North and South do vainly turn  
Unto these battle graves and vaguely yearn  
For the last loving word, the final kiss.  
But Mother Nature's heart most tender is,  
And wreathes each resting-place with moss and  
fern.

V.

LAND of the Future! Lift thy forehead high!  
As from the chamber lit by taper rays  
With hidden corners where the shadow plays,  
One goeth forth beneath the open sky  
Of the vast firmament and sends his eye  
Through starry spaces with a deep amaze,  
So now a boundless vision meets thy gaze  
In which the wings of faith unfettered fly.  
The Future beckons. None shall say thee nay!  
Go forth in large resolve with giant stride,

Nor in the folds of doubt thy talents hide.  
The dawn of Hope triumphant beams to-day,  
No gate, no caste, no creed shall bar its way.  
God's purposes forever shall abide.

## VI.

O MORNING Land! From dreaming slumbers wake!  
High noon approacheth with occasion rare;  
For nobler victories now thy strength prepare,  
And every hindrance from thy shoulders shake.  
The magic sword of truth now boldly take,  
More than Excalibur in might, and dare  
To wrestle with all wrong, and overbear  
Each hindering foe, each chain of error break.  
Thy moral manhood prove by noble fight;  
Chivalric graces still the world doth need  
For peaceful conquests over pride and greed.  
Join then the tournament with armor bright,  
And win thine honors as a gentle knight,  
So shall thou boast a Chivalry indeed.

## VII.

PEACE be within thy borders! May the rude  
Trumpet of War no more with blast malign  
Disturb thy groves of laurel and of pine,  
So verdant now in balmy quietude.  
May lofty motive lower aims preclude,  
And Bethlehem's echoing song with cadence fine  
Inspire thy steadfast soul with love divine

And keep thee safe through fate's vicissitude.

In benison my voice I gladly lend.

May peaceful homes and fireside pleasures be

Thy cherished tokens of felicity.

O kindly land, with trustfulness, as friend,

Across thy hills and plains my prayers I send,

And give thee here my benedicite.

### VIII.

THOU larger land! Home of us all thou art!

Happy to-day that now the Cavalier

And Huguenot with Puritan draw near,

Hand clasped in hand and heart enlinked with heart.

Forgotten now be every vengeful smart,

And while we hold our native country dear,

May her wide bound proclaim in accents clear

That all mankind doth hold inherent part

In the All-Father's love and so hath claim

To human brotherhood; that all who fill

God's family may share the birthright still.

May largest loves add lustre to her fame

The while we hush the noise of strife and blame

In grateful songs of glory and goodwill.

### IX.

TRULY the new is older than the old.

It hath but slept awhile, enwrapped in mist,

But wakening earth the sunlight warm hath kissed,

And all the hills are decked in robes of gold.

Larger horizons now our eyes behold,  
Delusive fogs no more our way resist,  
The far-off future doth our hopes enlist  
And lengthening vistas to our view unfold.  
In vain in narrow bounds is knowledge pent;  
When God gives light in vain our ways we hide,  
Our finite wills check not the ocean tide,  
Unto our wanderings truth can ne'er be bent,  
But her straight bands of love and wisdom blent  
Our rapt obedient souls will safely guide.

### ALONG THE CONGAREE.

FROM Carolina's mountains  
Wee springs and brooklets flow,  
And join with rush and tumult  
To wet the plains below.  
Through sandhill and savanna  
And where the millsites be  
By quarried bluff and rockpile rough  
Floweth the Congaree.

A noble group of waters  
It rolls its sinuous tide  
'Neath moss-encumbered forests  
Where coon and "squinch-owl" hide.

We trace the map-line channels  
Like a grim ancestral tree  
Through wanderings vast to rest at last  
In the bed of the still Santee.

A hundred years have vanished  
Since moved the people's mind  
For a noble capital city  
The fitting site to find.  
At fork where the brave Saluda  
And tawny Broad we see  
In marriage bands, Columbia stands  
Upon the Congaree.

Nigh eighty years in beauty  
With shaded avenue  
And stately home and temple  
The garden city grew.  
Then one curst night in winter  
(O God, that such could be)  
Saw shot and shell and flames like hell  
Along the Congaree.

But see, the phoenix city  
Though hushed its life-pulse then,  
From shroud of ashes proudly  
Doth rear its crest again.  
Fair as of old, nay, fairer,  
No slave-mart now we see  
To soil with stain of sinful gain  
The untainted Congaree.

From peaceful hill of sunset  
    We gaze with ravished eyes  
Where granite pile and church spire  
    Half hid in verdure rise.  
The mists creep o'er the valley  
    Where the rocky Congaree  
Doth rippling flow to greet below  
    Its twin, the Wateree.

Or, covered bridge-way crossing  
    We pause where loud alarms  
The trembling city menaced  
    From camps of men in arms.  
War, charged with freedom's message,  
    Made scars that still we see  
On the massive wall of the State House tall  
    Beyond the Congaree.

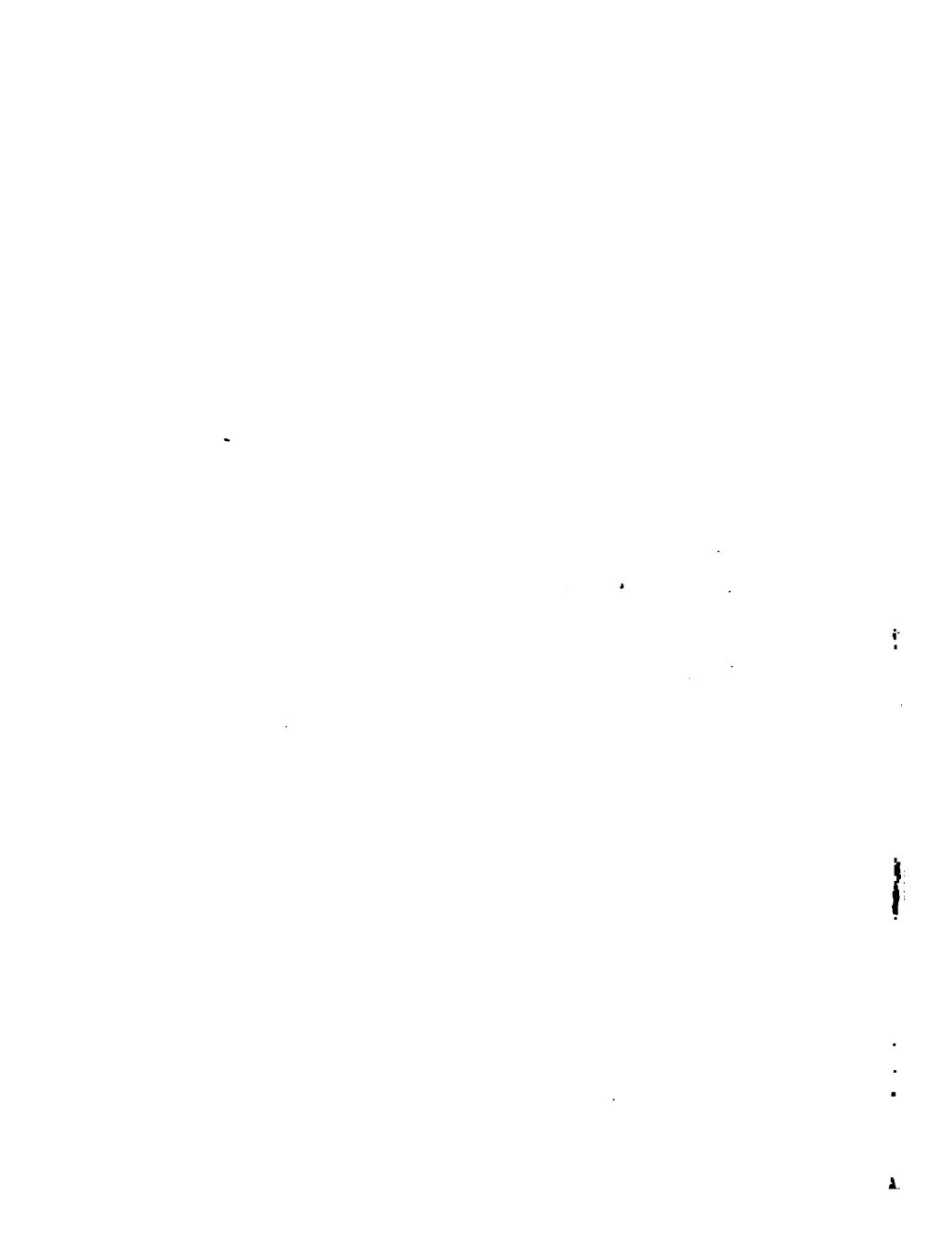
But sounds of peace now mingle  
    With the river's murmuring flow,  
Along its green embankments  
    The corn and cotton grow,  
Canal and farm and traffic  
    In common toil agree,  
And whirring mill doth work its will  
    With the idle Congaree.

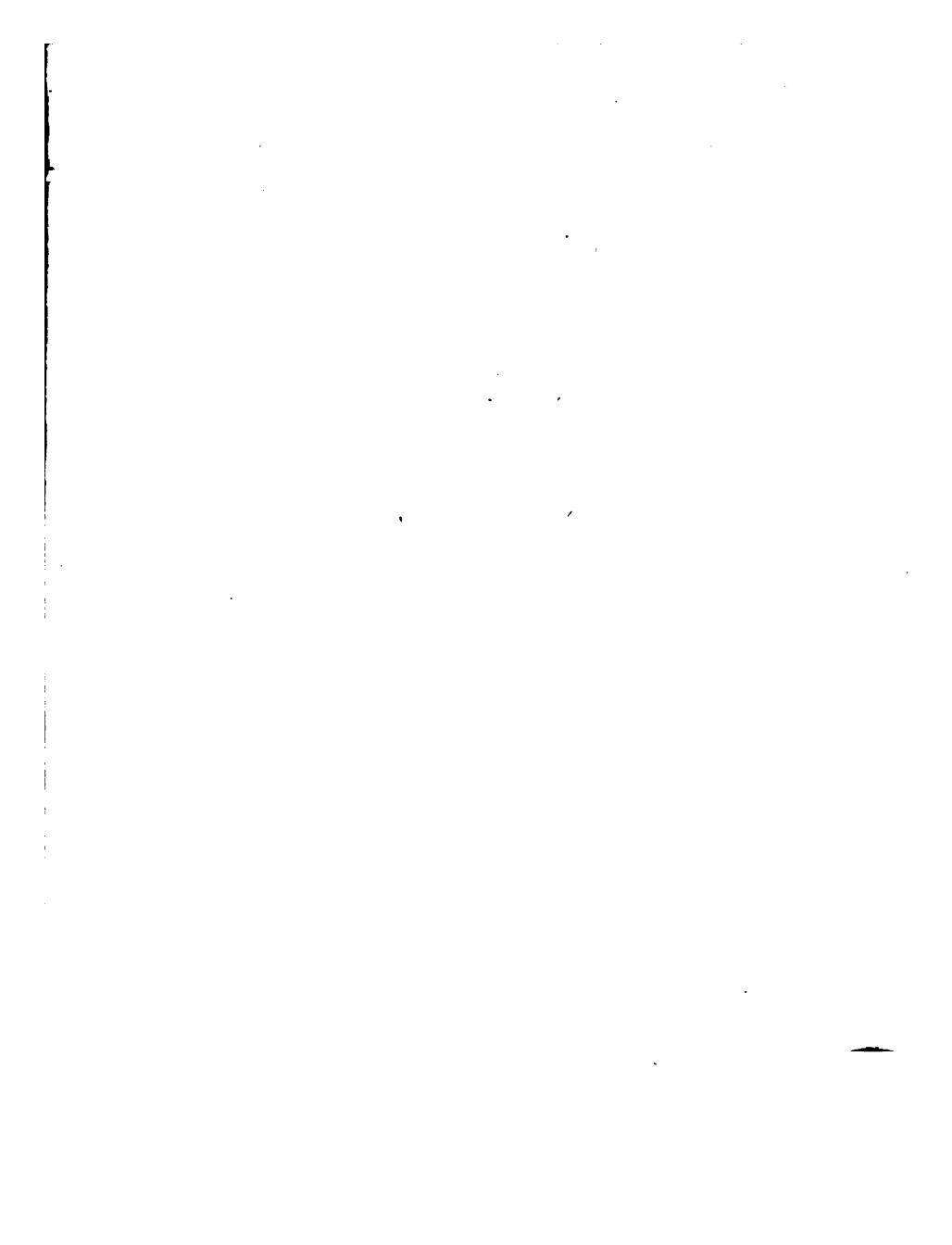
Thus rolls a lusty river  
    In shade and sunny gleam  
Through meadow and where rock-ledge  
    Deflects the tortuous stream,

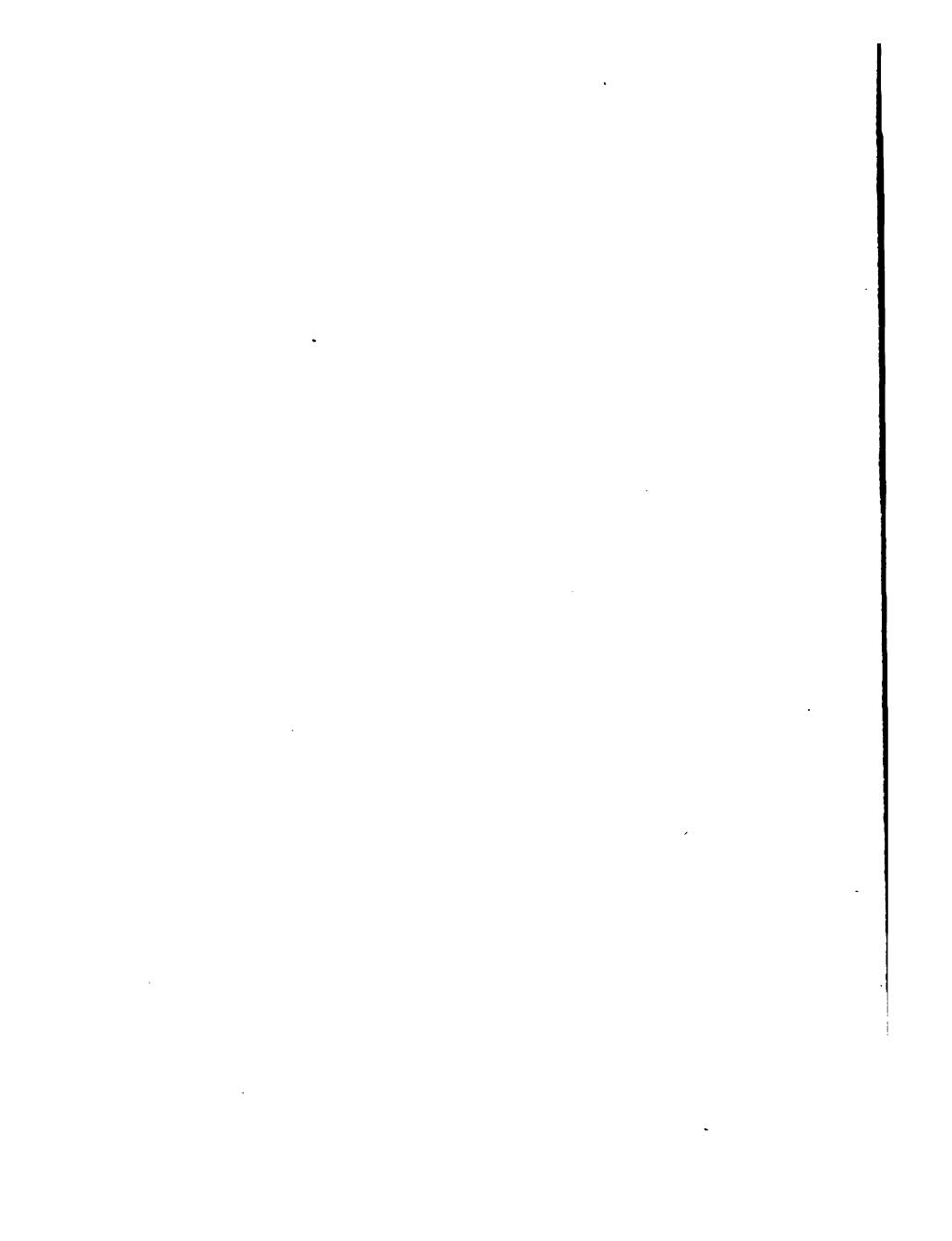
To seek its last abiding  
Near where the Great Pedee  
Doth find its way through Winyah Bay  
Into the restless sea.

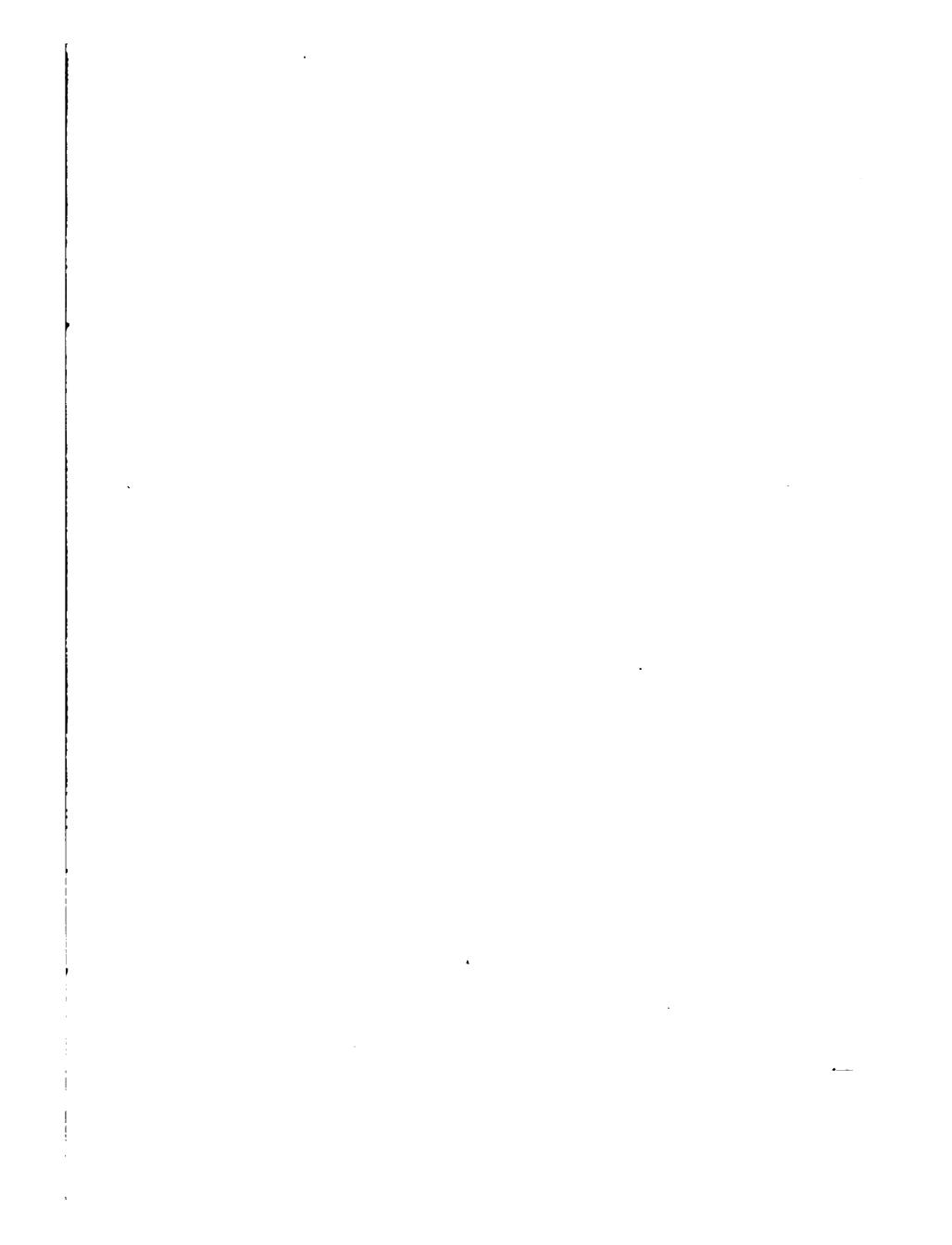
Now to its fertile basin  
May sun and shower be kind,  
Great Heaven all ills foreending;  
And may the future find  
From springs on Tryon Mountain  
Ard source of Ennoree  
From Alpine height to beachline white,  
A people wise and free.

And let all murmurings craven  
Within these borders cease,  
And in all hearts be mirrored  
The river's strength and peace.  
Joys felt are ours forever,  
And each of us will be  
Forever glad for joys we've had  
Beside the Congaree.









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